

CHRISTIANITY AND HINDOOISM
CONTRASTED;

OR,

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE EVIDENCE

BY WHICH

THE RESPECTIVE CLAIMS TO DIVINE AUTHORITY

OF

The Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus

ARE SUPPORTED.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

THE
HISTORICAL AND AUXILIARY EVIDENCES
BY WHICH THE
DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IS SUPPORTED,
AND THE
PREPONDERANCY OF THESE EVIDENCES OVER ANY OF
A SIMILAR CHARACTER WHICH CAN BE BROUGHT
FORWARD IN SUPPORT OF THE CLAIMS
OF THE HINDOO SHASTRUS.

CHAPTER I.	Page
ON THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.	
The Connection between the Credibility of the Gospel History and the Divine Authority of the Scriptures,	3
SECTION 1.—The Evidence by which it is proved that the Gospel is a genuine and not a fictitious Narrative,	4
SECTION 2.—On the Incredibility of the Hindoo Shastrus, and the Absence of all collateral Testimony in Support of their Claims to Divine Authority, ...	20

CHAPTER II.

Page

OF MIRACLES.

Principles of the Argument derived from Miracles,	30
SECTION 1.—On the Reality of the Christian Miracles, and the Evidence deduced from them, in Support of the Divine Authority of the New Testament,	36
SECTION 2.—Collateral Observations referring to the Christian Miracles,	53
SECTION 3.—Of the Hindoo Miracles,	63

CHAPTER III.

OF PROPHECY.

Statement of the Argument derived from Prophecy,	70
SECTION 1.—View of the Prophecies recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,	79
SECTION 2.—On the alleged Prophecies of the Hindoo Shastras,	246

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

The Argument which is derived from the Resurrection of Christ stated,	263
SECTION 1.—View of the Evidences of Christ's Resurrection,	265
SECTION 2.—Further Remarks on the Resurrection, with the Evidence derived from it, in Support of the Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures,	275

CHAPTER V.

ON THE SUFFERINGS AND CONDUCT OF THE APOSTLES.

Principles of the Argument, derived from the Labours and Sufferings of the Apostles in the cause of Christianity, ...	289
SECTION 1.—A Succinct View of the Persecutions and Trials which the Apostles of Jesus Christ underwent in their Endeavours to propagate the Christian Faith,	297

SECTION 2.—Examination of the Motives by which the Apostles were actuated in their Endeavours to promote the Spread of the Gospel,	305
SECTION 3.—On the Conduct and Motives of those who suffer according to the Rites of the Hindoo Religion,	319

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

Of the Evidence which is derived from the rapid Spread of the Gospel on its first publication,	326
SECTION 1.—Of the extraordinary Spread of the Gos- pel at the Commencement of the Christian Era, ...	328
SECTION 2.—Of the Spread of Mahomedanism,	355

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Objections commonly advanced by the Hindoos against the Christian Religion,	369
Concluding Observations,	396

THE
HISTORICAL AND AUXILIARY EVIDENCES
BY WHICH THE
DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IS SUPPORTED,
AND THE
PREPONDERANCY OF THESE EVIDENCES OVER ANY OF
A SIMILAR CHARACTER WHICH CAN BE BROUGHT
FORWARD IN SUPPORT OF THE CLAIMS OF
THE HINDOO SHASTRUS.

IN the preceding part of this work, according to the first of the two rules which at the commencement I brought forward* as the principles of the investigation about to be entered upon, I have instituted a comparison between the Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus, and, by the application of that rule to the contents of each, have endeavoured to ascertain the truth or falsehood of their respective claims. I shall now pro-

* See Vol. i. pages 11, and 12.

ceed to examine in the following chapters, according to the second rule, The credibility of the witnesses by whom the divine authority of the Christian Scriptures is attested : and by continuing the comparison as before, shall then endeavour not only to shew the solid evidence from miracles, prophecy, and other subjects of this nature, on which the truth of the Bible rests; but at the same time endeavour to prove, on account of their deficiency of this evidence, the falsehood of those claims which the Hindoo Shastras present to the same high authority.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CREDIBILITY OF
GOSPEL HISTORY AND THE DIVINE AUTHORITY
OF THE SCRIPTURES.**

Walker's definition of the word Credibility is, "The possibility of obtaining belief." We trust, however, that in examining the Gospel History it will be found to be sustained and authenticated, by a body of evidence not merely sufficient to render the belief of it possible, but by a mass of evidence of such an overwhelming character, as to render the disbelief of it morally and rationally impossible.

The credibility, or the genuineness, of the Gospel History lies at the foundation of all the various branches of historical evidence, by which the divine authority of the New Testament is sustained. It is vain to attempt to prove that it is a revelation from God, and to adduce arguments in support of this position, derived from the miracles which it records,

the prophecies which it unfolds, the resurrection of Christ, and other subjects of a similar nature, unless it be first shewn that the books in which these things are recorded are authentic narratives. This subject, therefore, is the basis of that particular class of evidence to which the following pages are devoted; and if we can first shew from sufficient and indisputable authority, that the Gospel History is genuine, we shall then be prepared to appreciate the weight of those arguments which are deduced from its various historical details, in support of the divine authority of every part of the sacred volume.

SECTION 1.

The Evidence by which it is proved, that the Gospel History is a Genuine and not a Fictitious Narrative.

The subject presented to our view in this section embraces several points of enquiry; such for instance as, Whether the Four Gospels were actually written by the persons to whom they are ascribed? Whether they were written at the precise period at which they are said to have been written? and, Whether they are faithful narratives of facts, or merely the productions of fiction and romance?

On the first of these points, viz. Whether the gospel history was actually written by the persons to whom it is ascribed ? I observe, That the books which we possess under the titles of, the Gospel by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were written by the persons whose names they bear, we are fully warranted to believe, for the following reasons: *First*, They have from their first publication been uniformly attributed to them by all Christian writers. *Secondly*, The bitterest enemies of the Christian cause, men who were desirous of finding a flaw in it, and who exerted themselves in every possible way to check its progress in the world, have uniformly admitted that these books were written by the above-named evangelists: an admission that we certainly should not have had from them, had not the fact been so well established that there was no possibility of denying it. *Thirdly*, Most of the apostles suffered martyrdom for countenancing the writers of these books, asserting that they were written by their authority, and for bearing a stedfast and unshaken testimony to the truth of the facts which they record: a crisis to which we must suppose they would not have allowed themselves to have been brought, unless the above-named persons had been the real authors; and if they had not in addition to this

been themselves fully convinceed of the truth of the statements therein advanced.

On the second part of the enquiry, Whether the Four Gospels were written at the period at which they are said to have been written ? we may remark, that we have the most substantial and satisfactory reasons for believing that they were written at that, and at no other period. The present is the year 1834 of the Christian era. About that period of time, therefore, has now elapsed since the Redeemer became incarnate, and about 1800 years since he ascended to glory. The Gospel of Matthew was written about 7 or 8 years after that event, or about 1793 years ago; and the other three Gospels were written from 15 to 30 years later. Now the age when the Redeemer lived, was very prolific in books of various kinds. Several of the most approved works of antiquity, on science, history, and philosophy, made their appearance about that period, some a few years before, others a few years after; but it is a well ascertained fact, that in none of these scientific or historical works, written more than 1793 years ago, (or thereabouts,) do we find any quotation from, or even reference to the existence of, such a book as the New Testament ; which circumstance seems clearly to prove, that it did not exist antecedent to that period.

But from that time down to the present day, we find a succession of authors frequently referring to it, and in numerous instances introducing large quotations from it into their respective works. Now, if the reader will bear this in mind, he will, I think, allow that this circumstance alone is sufficient to fix the date of the New Testament. It proves that it was certainly written in the age to which it is referred, as well as by the persons whose names the several books it contains respectively bear. The manuscripts of the sacred books are moreover found in various ancient libraries, in all parts of the Christian world, and amount in number to several thousands. About five hundred have been actually examined and compared by learned men with extraordinary care; many of which were evidently transcribed as early as the eighth, seventh, sixth, and even the fourth centuries. Thus we are carried up very nearly to the time of the apostles, and the promulgation of the inspired writings; and the prodigious number of these manuscripts, the remote countries from whence they have been collected, and the identity of their contents, with the quotations which the Fathers of different ages have made from them, are abundantly sufficient to de-

monstrate the authenticity of the New Testament.

To put the subject, however, in the strongest possible light, I cannot perhaps do better than present it to the reader's view in the following order. Numbers of books were printed in England, Germany, France, and other nations, one hundred years ago; and in many of these books we find various quotations both from the Epistles and the Four Gospels—a fact which proves that the New Testament was then in existence, and that it has not been written since that period: just in the same way that Pope's version of Homer proves that the original existed before Pope wrote. We go back another century, and find precisely the same thing; that is, we go back two hundred years, and still find books printed at that period containing quotations from the same Scriptures—a solid proof that they were in existence antecedently to that period. In the same way we fall back upon another century, and another, and another; and in every century we find books written containing similar quotations. Thus we are carried back step by step, until we arrive at the precise time which the New Testament writers assign to their respective productions; and in every age subsequent to that period, we find their books frequently referred to by collateral

writers ; but in no instance whatever is any reference even made to them by any writers antecedent to that period, which incontrovertibly proves the truth and veracity of the sacred histories, so far as it concerns the date which they respectively affix to their works. And what gives additional importance to these quotations, and induces us to refer to them as so many subsidiary proofs of the truth of the Gospel History, is the amazing number of them, and the various languages in which they are to be found. No book in the world, I believe, ever arrested so much attention as the New Testament ; and it has been asserted by learned men, that the quotations referred to above are so exceedingly numerous, that were the original document lost, its whole contents might be supplied by the quotations from it which are found in the writings of the fathers of the first four centuries of the Christian Church.

Another circumstance which adds weight to the testimony derived from this source, arises from the character of many of the contemporary historians, and other writers here referred to. A very considerable number of them, such as Julian, Celsus, and others, were amongst the most virulent enemies of the Christian religion. They cannot therefore be charged with par-

tiality, or with having had their feelings and prejudices previously enlisted on its side, since the object which they had in view, whenever they referred to it, was to vilify its character and to check its progress. Every testimony therefore tending to prove the veracity of the sacred historians, or which in any measure corroborates the date they themselves affix to their works, derived from these writings, may be relied on with the most implicit confidence. I request the reader to bear this particularly in mind ; and I beg to assure him that the testimony derived from this class of writers is as sufficient to prove the point I now wish to establish, as the testimony of the best friends and advocates of Christianity ; viz. that the New Testament was actually written at the exact period which is affixed to it, and that this fact is clearly established by the universal assent and concurrent testimony of all who are acquainted with the subject.

The next part of the enquiry relates to the contents of the New Testament : Whether the circumstances therein narrated are facts or fables ? Now the two former points being, we trust, sufficiently established, we shall, I think, find no difficulty in making good our position here, and shewing from the clearest evidence, that its contents are nothing but a record of

facts ; or, in other words, that it is from beginning to end a genuine history.

In the first place I would remark, that there is something so very extraordinary in the Gospel History of the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, as to render the idea of its being a fiction an absurdity. " Amongst all the other histories in the world it stands singly and alone. In no age is any thing to be found that in the smallest degree resembles it, either in the history of fact, or in the fancies of fiction. This history in truth stands more completely apart from all other histories, than the sun in the heavens does from all other created objects. We may conceive of other suns in other systems ; but we can scarcely conceive of another such a personage, and of another such a history as that of the Lord of life and glory. As a man, we are told he was born in an obscure town, in humble circumstances ; there he is described as exhibited to public gaze, placed in the most critical positions. He is painted to the life as spotless in innocence : and that innocence is not the tame insipid thing of which most men would conceive, amounting to little more than inanity ; but combined with an energy of character which braved the shock of earth and hell ; yet that energy is shewn to be connected with a correctness in which envy

itself can find no fault, and a loveliness of benevolence which should fascinate the heart even more than it astonishes the intellect."

Now the position which we maintain here is, that the peculiarity of this history renders it impossible that it should be a forgery. It is so completely at variance with, and stands so entirely aloof from, all the imaginary sketches of character which the human mind has ever yet produced, that we cannot on any rational principles account for its peculiarity, except on the supposition that it is a true history, and contains the record of a divine personage. A single man may write a lovely fiction, but certainly not such an one as that which is contained in the evangelical record. To suppose, therefore, that this is a fiction, the production of an ingenious individual calling himself an evangelist; and then to suppose that three others assuming the same title joined him in the fraud, that they accomplished their object, maintained in their history a substantial harmony, and that without any more signs of preconcert than appear in the Four Gospels, is beyond the reach of all rational conception; and that they should moreover have executed this history in the loose way of memoirs and anecdotes, rather than in the form of systematic biography, renders the idea

of invention still more incredible, and throws an air of ridicule over the suspicion.

Suppose, however, we admit for the sake of argument, that it is even possible that the Gospel History may notwithstanding these things be a mere got up story; still it must in the exercise of common sense be allowed to have been the production of a class of men possessing masterly minds. But the writers of this history were not men of such a character; they were not literary men; men of great mental endowments, and accustomed to employ a commanding pen in telling to the utmost advantage what a well cultivated imagination had conceived. The Jews, as a nation, were not a literary people like the Greeks and Romans; and the evangelists were not even Jewish scribes. The authors moreover of this history, so far as it can be ascertained, have written nothing else; and it is altogether incredible that men circumstanced as they were, a handful of illiterate fishermen in Galilee, should have invented a story that surpasses the genius of all the literati of all nations and ages, should have delineated perfect virtue to the very life, and should have furnished a history, the fruit of their own imagination, which leaves all the inventions of their proud predecessors infinite leagues behind. The improba-

bility, or rather the impossibility of such a circumstance taking place is beautifully delineated by Dryden in his well known epigram.

“ Whence but from Heaven could men unskilled in arts,
 In several ages, born in several parts,
 Weave such agreeing truths, or how or why
 Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
 Unask’d their pains, ungrateful their advice,
 Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price.”

The idea that the Evangelic History is not a fable or a romance, is also supported by the ingenuousness, the simplicity, the artlessness, by which the whole narrative is characterised. We see, throughout the whole conduct of the writers, the plain straight forward testimony of honest witnesses to the truth. “ The style and manner of their books has not the least appearance of being studied. The consideration seems never to have entered their minds how this or the other action would affect their reputation, or appear to mankind. They lay the plain facts before the world exactly as they occurred, and if the reader will not credit their testimony, there is no help for it. They tell the truth, the whole truth, just as it happened, and nothing else. Who can avoid noticing, for example, the honesty with which they record their own failings, the dulness of their apprehension, their unbelief, their pride, their emulation, their disputes, the rebukes they brought upon them-

selves, their disgraceful flight and cowardice, the treachery of one of their number, and the denial of Christ by another. All these things, with numerous others of a similar character, which they mention, are so many distinct proofs of their integrity, and of the reality and truth of the history they have furnished." Most of these writers, moreover, were (as has already been observed) plain, illiterate men, no way qualified for attempting an imposture. The accounts which they have respectively furnished of their master, it is true, apparently vary from each other in a variety of instances; but their testimony to the broad facts of his life is uniform, decided, and conclusive. It is also clear to a demonstration, that they wrote from one common original, and that this original is kept constantly in view. These apparent varieties, therefore, only prove that they neither compared notes nor studied appearances, but proceeded in that straight forward course, which always characterises honest and independent witnesses: and another circumstance which ought to be borne in mind, and which goes very far to prove the same fact is, that the various events on which they expatiate are not referred to some remote age of the world, which is called fabulous, and to which authentic history never ascends, (as is

the case with the histories of the Chinese, Hindoos, and others,) but to a time when some of the best accredited historians were living, and to an age of the events of which we have the fullest and best authenticated narratives.

There is likewise a minuteness of detail about the Gospel History which evidences its truth, and which its authors would certainly have avoided had the whole been a mere fabrication. The Gospel of St. Matthew, for instance, opens with a reference to names and dates, which reduce the subject on which he writes to the test of historic truth. The time, the place, the manner, the effects, the witnesses, the enemies of the facts, are all stated in such a way as must have struck any inventor to be hazardous, or rather to be sure of leading to detection. No impostor, for example, would have ventured to have mentioned such things as are recorded concerning the Saviour's death. It is stated, that darkness happened at mid-day when he hung upon the cross; that he cried out, "It is finished,"—"Father into thy hand I commit my spirit;" that an earthquake split the rocks, opened the graves, and rent the veil of the temple; that in spite of the guards at the sepulchre the body was beyond their grasp on the third day. Now it must have been known to every inhabitant of Jeru-

salem, whether these and several other circumstances of a similar character which the Gospel narrates were true; and true they certainly must be, as no man in his senses would ever attempt to invent statements of this description, because these statements are of such a tangible nature, that if the history in which they are recorded were not true it could not in the face of such a minuteness of detail for a moment escape detection.

There is also another circumstance connected with this history which adds weight to the arguments already brought forward in support of its truth, viz. that the Jews (enemies as they were to Christianity) admitted its veracity. The enmity which these infatuated people manifested towards the gospel is perhaps unprecedented in the history of religious persecutions. They employed all the means which art and malice could devise to check its progress; but though we hear so much of the brute force to which they resorted, we never hear of any arguments they employed to refute the statements of its witnesses. The fact is, that instead of arguing against it they admit the truth of it in all its details. They acknowledge, for instance, the reality of the miracles of Christ; although they stand aloof from the conclusion to which this admission seems

necessarily to lead, viz. that Jesus was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. The impression made on their minds, on this subject, was evidently contrary to their wishes and prejudices, and that which undenialable miracles alone could produce; and their very endeavours to oppose and resist them, or if possible to explain away their just inference, proclaims aloud the authenticity and truth of the history in which they are recorded. When the Romans also, in imitation of the Jews, began to inherit the same spirit of persecution, they acted on the same principles; for, it was by persecution alone that they attempted to check the progress of the gospel. We meet with no rational argument or confronting testimony even from them, and no attempt to deny the broad facts with which the history of its triumphs is every where interwoven. In attempting therefore to establish our position on this ground, we are restricted, or if I may so speak, cramped in our efforts to prove the Gospel History true, by the total absence of every thing in the shape of reason that should prove it false. We bring our forces into a field in which we can find no tangible foe to encounter.

A slight glance, therefore, at the arguments we have now brought forward, will we trust be sufficient, in concluding this section, to con-

vince the reader that the Evangelical History was written by the persons to whom it is attributed, and at the date which is assigned to it, and that it is from the beginning to the end an authentic narrative. If these premises be admitted as correct, we shall then find it impossible to stop here. The admission of their truth necessarily forces upon us the conclusion, that the Bible is most assuredly a book divinely inspired,—the record of Heaven vouchsafed for the salvation of a guilty world. What I mean to say is, that this history is altogether so unique, the exalted dignity and character of the chief person whom it exhibits is so far above the standard of all that the world has either before or since ever been favoured with, that he must be a divine person. The description, therefore, which is there given of him as the Saviour of the world must be correct, and the book which records his life, sufferings, and death, is thereby sufficiently authenticated to warrant our receiving it in the character which it claims, as the pure, the exclusive, and the unadulterated word of God.

SECTION 2.

*On the Incredibility of the Hindoo Shastrus,
and the Absence of all collateral Testimony
in Support of their Claims to Divine Au-
thority.*

In writing upon the subject to which the present section is devoted, I am not aware that I can improve upon the method which has been pursued in examining the authenticity of the New Testament, in the section which has just been dismissed. Our first enquiry there related to the writers of the Christian Scriptures ; after which we proceeded to consider the question as to the period at which they were written, with such other subjects as an investigation of this nature necessarily involves ; and if we institute an enquiry of a similar character in reference to the Hindoo Shastrus, we shall, by thus bringing the two into comparison with each other, be able to perceive which of them bears the most authentic and best attested evidence of its being a revelation from God.

Hindooism, I am aware, has a host of friends ; and the antiquity of its Shastrus is assumed by many of them as proof sufficient of their divine origin.

This ground, however, is by no means tenable; and yet it is almost the only ground on which the high pretensions of these sacred books are founded. Indeed, every effort made to defend them, whether on this or any other ground, is only calculated to bring forth more conspicuously to light their glaring inconsistencies; and their friends, whenever they attempt this work, usually find that they are speedily involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, from which it is no easy matter to escape. In reference to the first point of enquiry specified above, viz. the persons by whom the *Shastrus* were written, I observe, that it is utterly impossible on this ground, or by arguments derived from this source, to prove their credibility by a process of reasoning similar to what we have pursued in reference to the Bible. I do not refer in this observation to the arguments which may be adduced either for or against their divine authority; (that is another question and one which rests on other grounds;) I merely speak of them here in the light of ordinary historical records, just as I have done of the New Testament in the foregoing section; and I mean to say, that their veracity in this point cannot be established by any satisfactory evidence, neither can it be shown on any solid ground that they are true and au-

thentic documents, and not the productions of fiction and romance.

There is, as an intelligent observer may easily perceive, a vagueness and obscurity about these *Shastras*, in respect both of their contents and the character of the persons who are said to have written them ; so that we can neither grasp the one, nor properly define the other. Very little is in fact known about the latter beyond what they themselves have recorded ; and this circumstance at once throws an air of suspicion over their writings, and suggests in the way of general inference that they are of doubtful origin, and cannot with propriety be depended upon.

I would not here venture to say, that the persons whose names are affixed to these sacred writings, (so far as names are affixed,) were not their real authors. They may have been so ; but then we know little or nothing either of the moral or intellectual character of those individuals, and have therefore no sufficient ground of confidence to justify us in our dependance upon them as men of uprightness and integrity. This remark, however, only applies to those *Shastras* in which the writer has openly avowed himself. In some of the most celebrated of these writings, such as the *Veda*, the *Tantras*, and others, the author has with-

held his name altogether ; and therefore to get rid of the doubt which attaches to them on this ground, the Hindoos ascribe the former to Brumha, and the latter to Shiu ; and some of them even go so far as to say that the Vedus were written before the creation of the world.

To speak the plain truth, the most famous of the Hindoo Shastrus are anonymous ; and I beg the reader to bear in mind that anonymous publications are always more or less to be suspected, and are generally viewed as inferior in respectability to those works in which the writer openly stands forth to view. But books put forth under the character of a divine revelation, and claiming universal credence without the writer's name being affixed, and the world being informed from whose pen they have proceeded, is an unheard of anomaly ; and, to say the least of it, it shews that the writers had but a mean opinion of the intellect of the people amongst whom these books were intended to be circulated, to suppose that they would receive such unauthenticated productions as the word of God.

Both the person and the character of the various individuals who wrote the several parts of the Bible are well known ; and an argument either for or against the parts which they respectively wrote, and in some instances

either for or against the whole book, may be founded upon this circumstance. But on this ground the most famous of the Hindoo Shastrus are not tangible. Here they elude our grasp altogether, because the authors, by concealing their names, and assigning to their productions a high degree of antiquity, have at once put it out of our power, (the very object which they no doubt had in view when they wrote,) to bring them to the sure test of historic truth.

Our second point of enquiry in the former section, related to the period at which the Gospel History was written; and we then adduced evidence to shew that a correct date has been assigned to it by its respective authors. In this point of view also the Hindoo Shastrus will bear no comparison with the well authenticated records of that sacred Book. Our search for dates is even more fruitless than our search for names. On the latter point some information may be obtained, but (with few exceptions) absolutely nothing on the former. The most venerated of these Shastrus, as I have just observed, are sunk so deep in the dark abyss of antiquity, that every attempt which has been made to discover the period at which they were written, has hitherto proved

fruitless ; and the same may be said likewise as to those *Shastrus* which are of less notoriety, and which are acknowledged on all hands to be comparatively recent productions, for to the most of *them* also no specific date is affixed by the authors. We are therefore as much at a loss to find out the actual period when *they* were written, as we are to find out the true date of the *former*.

Now we derive an argument in support of the divine authority of the New Testament, from the correctness of its dates. We cannot, however, present such an argument in favour of the Hindoo *Shastrus*, were we even inclined to do so. But we can bring forward an argument of a contrary nature derived from this source ; the want of dates, as well as of the authors' names, furnishes us with an additional argument against them, and increases our suspicion that they are not genuine ; or rather it forces upon us the conviction that they are false, and cannot with propriety be received either as divine records, or as well authenticated historical productions.

Another circumstance, likewise, which militates very much against the truth of these *Shastrus* is, the absence of all collateral testimony in favour of them. I have before stated, that the truth of the New Testament, simply

considered as a history, is abundantly supported by the testimony of various cotemporary historical writers—Greeks, Romans, and others ; some of whom were favourable, and others decidedly hostile to the cause of Christianity. A very slight observation, however, will shew us, that no evidence derived from a similar source can be brought forward to prove that the records of the Hindoo Shastrus are true. We find no collateral writers of other nations—no Chinese, Burmese, or other authors, who in any way allude to the rise and progress of Hindooism. In the case of the New Testament, and the religion which it inculcates, there is an amazing mass of collateral testimony of this nature ; but in reference to the Hindoo Shastrus, and the religion which they are designed to uphold, there is a total absence of any document of this sort calculated to throw light upon them, or which bears any portion of auxiliary or supplementary evidence in their favour. Whilst this collateral evidence, therefore, in the case of the Bible, confirms the truth of its testimony, and adds weight to the arguments adduced in favour of its divine origin, the absence of it, as it respects the Shastrus of the Hindoos, increasingly tends to confirm us in our belief, that they are the offspring of fraud, and have no solid ground

whatever on which to rest their pretended authority.

The last argument we bring forward to prove the incredibility of these sacred writings, is derived from the character of their contents. Walker, as I have before observed, gives as the meaning of the word Credibility, "that which may be believed :" we think, therefore, we are not deficient in charity, when we employ the term incredible in reference to these writings, because they contain that which may not be believed. Such is the nature of their contents, that they are altogether incredible. Their records are of such a wild and romantic character, that we cannot in the exercise of reason and common sense possibly give credence to them. Take for instance the story of the Lingu of Shiva, and the events which are said to have happened to Brumha when he went in search of it, and hired the cow, Kamu, and the tree, Ketukee, as false witnesses. See also the unbounded honour which the Shastrus ascribe to the Bramhans, a class of men who we see are in no one respect whatever better than their fellow-creatures. "One of them, we are told, made heaven. Another, it is said, made a child of grass, which an honourable woman could not distinguish from her own son. One Bramhun made fire, a second

imparted to it its property of consumption, and a third gave it its property of extinction. A Bramhun, according to the rules of the *Shastras*, must not be put to death, though he may be guilty of the most enormous offences. When an individual weeps for any person that a Bramhun may have killed, he must make an atonement for his sin in so doing. Doorga is pleased, say the *Shastras*, with the blood of a man a thousand years, but no Bramhun must be sacrificed to her. *Gurudu* used to eat all sorts of creatures except Bramhuns, which if swallowed would have caused an insufferable pain in his stomach."

In addition to these observations, I refer the reader to what has been brought forward on the same subject in the former parts of this work. I beg, however, to remind him that the whole of what I have stated, both here and before, is not a tithe of the unreasonable and outlandish statements which these *Shastras* contain.

These fables, then, we conceive, speak for themselves to every rational and intelligent mind. They carry their own evidence along with them in reference to the character of the Books in which they are found—an evidence not *for* but against them,—an evidence which at once justifies the use of the term “incredibility,” which I have employed when

referring to them at the commencement of this section,—an evidence which proves that they are altogether of fabled origin, and utterly unworthy of that high veneration and respect which so many millions of our fellow-creatures influenced by the prince of darkness, have from time immemorial been continually rendering them.

CHAPTER II.

OF MIRACLES

**PRINCIPLES OF THE ARGUMENT DERIVED
FROM MIRACLES.**

The credibility of the New Testament history, as we have before stated, lies at the foundation of all the arguments drawn from its historical details in favour of its divine authority. Having, therefore, as we think, satisfactorily proved, that considered merely as a history, it is undoubtedly genuine, that the characters of whom it speaks actually existed, that the events which it narrates certainly took place, and that they took place moreover at the precise period and under the particular circumstances therein specified, we now proceed to adduce a series of arguments, derived from its various details, in support of its divine inspiration, which we think amply sufficient to prove, that the religion which it unfolds is a religion which has come from God.

The first species of proof furnished by its historical records is derived from the various miracles said to have been wrought by the

original Founder, and afterwards by the principal champions of the Christian religion. A miracle, the reader must bear in mind, (for it seems necessary to define what is meant by a miracle,) is an event in providence which takes place contrary to the established order or course of nature; that is, an event which is above or beyond the power of ordinary or natural causes to produce. God, in conducting the affairs of this nether world, has laid down certain principles and certain laws on which he ordinarily acts, and which in the language of philosophy are called the laws of nature, but in the language of Scripture the ordinances of Heaven, Job xxxviii. 33, and Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. These laws, or ordinances, are continually in operation, through the whole extent of our globe, and the various planetary bodies by which it is surrounded. "The orb which rolls through unmeasured space, and the atom which wantons in the breeze are alike subject to their control." The method in which they act is evidently seen to be in what is commonly called the relation or connection of cause and effect; that is, connecting in their harmonious movements all the ordinary occurrences of the natural world with certain legitimate and necessary causes. Much of the phenomena of nature, in consequence of

the well known operation of these laws, can be clearly comprehended, and easily explained by men of science and philosophy; and yet there is much connected with the subject that is difficult and mysterious. Such, for instance, "as how or why the loadstone attracts iron, the rose emits its fragrance, or the musical instrument sends forth its melody of sound; that no philosophy has yet been been able or probably ever will be able satisfactorily to explain." Now as God has established these laws, it of course follows that no power short of his can possibly alter them, or check their regular and harmonious operations; consequently, whenever any deviation from these ordinary rules takes place, we are warranted to believe that it takes place through the interposition of His hand alone.

Any event therefore which occurs in the world, which is not in accordance with these general principles; that is, any event in which there is either a suspension of the laws of nature on the one hand, or which on the other demonstrates the interposition of a power beyond what nature ordinarily puts forth, or rather such as it never can in accordance with these rules put forth, is an event which may be justly turned miraculous.

If therefore any individual, or any class of

individuals, present themselves to the world, and openly perform a variety of such works as may justly, according to this interpretation, be termed miraculous, the conclusion at which we arrive on witnessing these events is, that a divine hand is working with them, and that they are acting under the power and influence of a divine commission.

Two things, however, must here be premised, or rather two remarks of an explanatory or of a qualifying nature must here be offered, in order to guard this observation from misconstruction and abuse. *First*, Whenever God thus interposes and delegates the power to work miracles to any class of men, there will most assuredly be some object worthy of, or sufficiently momentous to justify, such interference ; that is, there will undoubtedly be some great, wise and holy end designed to be accomplished by these miraculous interpositions, which is worthy of, and in accordance with, the high character and exalted perfections of the Deity. *Secondly*, The miracles wrought for this purpose will, we have reason to suppose, be marked and peculiar in their nature ; there will be nothing low or childish about them ; nothing of the appearance of trickery or juggling ; but they will in every respect be suited to their object, in harmony with the

perfections of God, and such as are not unbecoming for him, in accordance with his high and holy nature, to put forth his power in order to accomplish.

Holding fast therefore by these principles, we can give no credit to the claims which any class of men may advance to miraculous powers, unless it be first shewn that their professed miracles are of the nature here described. Nor can we believe that the Deity would interpose, by communicating such a power to any individual, or any class of individuals, unless there existed some reason for his interfering similar to what I have before stated. But if, on the other hand, a body of men, claiming a commission from the Deity, perform from time to time a series of extraordinary works, apparently miraculous, and of the character described above ; if they assert that these works are real miracles, are wrought by his power, and are intended as a confirmation of their commission ; if the object designed to be accomplished by these professed miraculous operations be worthy of the high character of God ; if it be connected in any way with the general welfare of mankind ; and if miracles be at all requisite to give efficiency to the means employed for accomplishing that object, we have, in such a case, every reason to believe

that these men are possessed of true miraculous powers, that the works which they thus perform are genuine miracles, and that they are really acting under the authority of a divine commission, and ought to be received in the character which they claim, as the servants of the most high God.

Now the application of these remarks to the New Testament Scriptures is as follows. Various miracles are there said to have been wrought by Jesus Christ and his apostles. These miracles are found on examination to be altogether worthy of the high and holy character of God, and in strict harmony with all the essential attributes of his nature.

They were likewise designed to attest the truth of the Christian religion, and to aid its establishment in the world. This religion has in view the welfare, and is connected with the best interests, of the human race. And at the time these miracles were wrought, some interposition of this nature was required, to aid its progress, and accelerate its interests amongst mankind.

All therefore that we now have to do is, to prove the *reality* of these miracles, and to shew that they are attested by a sufficient body of trustworthy and respectable witnesses; and if this can be done, that is, we can establish this

point, and clearly prove the reality and truth of the Christian miracles, we conceive that in doing this we at once establish, and that on an immovable basis, the truth and divine authority of the Christian Scriptures; for these miracles were wrought to confirm the truth of the Scriptures, and the two must stand or fall together. If the miracles fall, (*i. e.* if they are false,) the Scriptures, and the religion which they are designed to uphold, must fall with them; but if they are authenticated, and proved to be real instances of divine interposition, we then maintain that the evidence which proves them to be true proves at the same time that the New Testament is true also,—that it is a book divinely inspired, and is worthy to be received as a true and unadulterated revelation from the Deity, in opposition to all the claims of those false *Shastras*, by which the nations of the earth have been so long and so wofully deceived.

SECTION 1.

On the Reality of the Christian Miracles, and the Evidence deduced from them, in Support of the Divine Authority of the New Testament.

The truth and reality of the Christian miracles may, perhaps, at first sight appear to the reader, to be partially if not wholly substantiat-

ed or included in the truth and credibility of the Gospel History, as illustrated in the preceding chapter. If he looks minutely into the subject, however, he will perceive that these two points are perfectly distinct from each other. We have already shewn that the Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear; that they were written at the time therein specified; and that the events which they narrate actually took place. Thus far, simply considered as an historic detail, we have we think sufficiently proved that they are true and worthy to be credited. But the subject of our present investigation is distinct from the several topics of this nature into which we enquired in the foregoing chapter, in as much as that related to the actual occurrence of the events specified, and this relates to the character or nature of those events. It is to the latter subject that we now more particularly address ourselves; and the question arising from this subject as it now presents itself to our view is as follows. Were those extraordinary circumstances which in the New Testament history are said to have taken place, and which are there called miracles, indeed true miracles: that is, were they wrought by a power communicated from God, or simply by the exercise of some art or power which the persons, who

are said to have wrought them possessed, and with which the Deity had nothing whatever to do? This I say is the question now before us; and the position which we assume in reference to it is, that those extraordinary occurrences were not the effects of any art or power which the persons who wrought them naturally possessed,—were not the effects of juggling and trickery; but that they were real miracles, and nothing else. In order to convince the reader that they have a fair claim to be viewed in this light, I shall now proceed to state the proofs of their reality,—proofs which are adduced from their number and variety, the circumstances under which they were wrought, the witnesses by whom they were attested, and other sources of a similar nature.

In the first place, I remark, that it was not one, two, or three instances in which the Lord Jesus Christ primarily, and afterwards his apostles, professed to exercise their miraculous powers—* “not,” as an excellent and pious

* I do not here mean to say that the miraculous powers of our Lord Jesus Christ and those of the apostles were of the same order: far from it; he wrought his miracles by means of a power which he possessed in himself, as a divine person; but they wrought theirs by means of a power which was derived from him, and for the exercise of which they were continually dependent upon him.

prelate has well observed, “one or two professed miracles that they wrought with many failures, and a long interval of time between, but a great number without a single failure during the whole course of their ministry.” Miracles of omnipotence and benevolence were in fact wrought in such numbers by the Redeemer, that they are thrown together in a cloud like stars in the milky way. His whole life was a life of miracles. He went about doing good in the exertion of an abiding, unfailing, supernatural power. More than fifty express miracles which he wrought are recorded, whilst whole masses of them are registered in such words as these: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease amongst the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.” Matt. iv. 23, 24. And at the close of his history Saint John adds, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:—the which if they should be written

every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John xx. 30, and xxi. 25.

The instances, moreover, which are recorded of these supernatural operations are not of one or two descriptions merely ; but are extremely diversified, and of multifarious kinds, and include such numerous and various suspensions of the course of nature, as, under all the circumstances of the case, furnish the most decisive and irrefragable proof of a real miraculous agency. Almost all the diseases to which human nature is subject, were at some period or other brought under the miraculous powers of Christ and his apostles : persons who were lame, deaf, or dumb, some who were paralized, and others who had been blind from their mothers' womb, with many more suffering from other diseases incident to humanity, were cured by them with a word, or a touch ; in short, they healed the sick, they cast out devils, they raised the dead. Nature both animate and inanimate, with the visible and invisible world, were all successively the objects of their miraculous operations. But it is not simply the miracles themselves which demand our notice. The witnesses before whom they were wrought, and the proofs by which their reality and truth are attested, also demand our attention. Na-

ture, it is evident from observation, is always slow in its operations. The miracles therefore of the New Testament cannot be attributed to any combination of natural causes, or fortuitous arrangement of events; because they were in general accidental in their circumstances, and instantaneous in their operation, though always permanent in their effects. Had these miracles been wrought in private, or only in the presence of such persons as were friendly to the doctrines they were designed to confirm, we might without any breach of charity have doubted their reality. But we find on examining the records by which they are attested, that the reverse was the case. "The works that I do," said Christ, John v. 36, referring to the miracles which he had wrought, "bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me;" and this remark, it must be borne in mind, was made in the presence of his opponents and revilers. And speaking of these opponents on another occasion, he said, "If I had not done amongst them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." To his apostles he also said, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake;" and when the disciples of John the Baptist came to him proposing the enquiry, "Art thou he that should

come, or look we for another?" it is said, that in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and their plagues, and to many that were blind he gave sight. And having done this, he sent them away to their master, saying, "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

In short so open were his miracles, and his power to perform them under all circumstances so well known and authenticated, that the people were accustomed to say of him in the most familiar language, "Let him speak only and it shall be done;" "let me but touch the hem of his garment, and I shall be made whole;" and it is added, that "as many as touched it, were made whole of whatsoever disease they had."

Again, in 2 Cor. xii. 12, the Apostle Paul tells the members of the church at Corinth, that the signs of an apostle were wrought by him amongst them in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. Now the persons to whom the apostle thus wrote called in question the truth of his apostolic mission; and to the miracles which had been wrought amongst them, he referred as a confirmation of it, which

he certainly would not have done had no miracles ever been wrought. The appeal of Christ, likewise, to the same miraculous operations, as stated in the first of the above named passages, was made to those who were decidedly hostile to him, and most inveterate enemies to the religion which his miracles were designed to establish; and neither in the one case nor the other, do we find the truth of the miracles referred to disputed. The uniform silence, therefore, of both parties proves that such miracles actually were wrought, that they were wrought publicly both before friends and enemies, were open to investigation, and were so striking and convincing as to be utterly indisputable. Several of the enemies of Christ, influenced by malice, as we are informed in Mark iii. 22, blasphemously asserted that his miracles were wrought by the power of the devil: but the fact of their having actually been wrought they never attempted to deny; and as the object of these men was to injure the cause of Christianity, and prevent if possible its spread in the world, we may be fully certain that could they in any way have denied the truth of the miracles on which its credibility rested, instead of attempting as they did in a thousand other ways to ruin its interests, they would at once have resorted to this

as being the most likely method of accomplishing their object. But instead of doing so, we find that many of the men who in the first instance opposed and persecuted the gospel, on the conviction of the truth of its miracles afterwards embraced it. On the ground of this conviction their Christian characters were formed ; and on the same principle they afterwards submitted to unheard of pains and privations, and ultimately to death itself, in order to defend its truths and accelerate its interests. I may also appeal to the well known character of Christ, as furnishing an additional testimony (though of a collateral nature) in favour of the reality of his miracles. If it could be discovered that he had some object in view of a secular nature, which these miracles were designed to further, their reality in such a case might well be disputed. " His character, however, and his motives in this as well as in every other respect, stand fair and open, cloudless and unshadowed. There is in fact no stain upon his glory, no blemish upon his pretensions ; there is nothing to vitiate the man or cast a doubt upon his credentials. The only object he had in view was one of a pure, celestial nature, altogether free from the breath of the world's contamination. His miracles were wrought not to magnify a saint—not to exalt

a sect—not to bring money to the coffers of priests, but to attest and establish the fact that life and immortality were brought ~~to~~ light by the gospel which he preached."

The last argument which I shall adduce in favour of the Christian miracles is, that they have never been denied nor objected to by any of the numerous apostates from Christianity. Had Christ, for instance, been an impostor, or had there been any kind of deception or fraud in the miracles which he wrought, it of course must have been known to his immediate disciples, to whom the arduous task of propagating the Christian religion was delegated. We may therefore in this case reasonably suppose, that when Judas betrayed the founder of this religion, he would, in order to justify his own infamous conduct, have discovered the secret, and published the fraud to the world. Again, Constantine, Emperor of Rome, having embraced the Christian religion, his nephew Julian embraced it likewise; not (as is generally supposed) because he was convinced of its truth, but because he was heir to the throne, and considered that by becoming a Christian, he would please the reigning Prince, which as a matter of course would be favourable to his views of succession. He had, however, no sooner

obtained possession of the imperial diadem than he threw off the mask, by renouncing Christianity, and becoming an idolater: and though, in order to justify his own conduct, he opposed and afterwards wrote against Christianity; yet he never attempted to falsify or even to question the truth of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, nor impeached in any other way the veracity of the sacred writers. Now, had there been any fraud or duplicity connected with the history of the Christian miracles, he, having been initiated into the secrets of Christianity, must of course have been acquainted with it; and would undoubtedly, in vindication of his own conduct, have communicated this information to the world. A variety of other examples of a similar kind might also be brought forward, since in order to save their lives, many in the days of persecution renounced the gospel, which they had previously embraced, but not one single instance is left on record, of any who thus renounced it having ever impeached the veracity of the inspired penmen, or attempted to prove that the miracles recorded in the New Testament were false or fabulous statements. We are told, in the 3d chapter of John, that Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night, and said unto him: "Rabbi, we

know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And again, in Acts iv. 15, 16, we are informed, that when two of the disciples of Christ were brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim, the members of this court " conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men ? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell at Jerusalem ; and *we cannot deny it.*" The manner in which these rulers of the Jews and enemies of the gospel are here stated to have expressed themselves, with reference to the reality of the miracle referred to, and which is recorded in the preceding verses, is worthy of observation. Their declaration of their *inability to deny it*, evidently proves, that instead of conceding the truth of it in the manner they did, they would have denied it, had there been any plausible ground on which they could have founded the denial. It is therefore sufficiently evident, from this concession of the enemies, as well as from the testimony of the friends of Christianity, that the truth of the miracles recorded by the Evangelists is a thing which was never disputed. We have here the evidence of all parties, and this universal acknowledgement as to the actual occurrence

of the facts, and the manner in which they speak of them, is a satisfactory and incontrovertible proof not only that the events narrated positively took place, but it is moreover a proof that they were uniformly viewed both by friends and foes as real and genuine miracles.

There is in short no testimony to any one fact of antiquity, to be compared with that by which the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles are supported—testimony so circumstantial, so unvarying, so public, delivered in such a diversity of situations by men of equal competence and character. And I do not as an individual hesitate to avow that I have as much confidence in the testimony by which the reality of these miracles is sustained, as I have in my own senses; and my persuasion of the truth would not be more certain, although my apprehension of the facts would be more vivid, if I had seen them with my own eyes, and had heard them with my own ears.

The argument therefore, which is founded upon these miracles, must, if by these observations we are prepared to appreciate it, be acknowledged to be simple and conclusive. This argument is as follows. It is satisfactorily ascertained, by the most indubitable evidence that the miracles recorded in the Christian Scriptures were actually wrought, in exact

conformity to the testimony which is there given. They were wrought in attestation of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion. The object was connected with the greatest and best interests of man, and of sufficient importance to be worthy of the divine interposition. On these principles, therefore we are sufficiently warranted to conclude, that Christianity is true; and to assert that the divine authority of the Bible, which contains the records of that holy religion, is by these miraculous interpositions so satisfactorily confirmed and substantiated; that all who reject it will most certainly be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

2 Thess. i. 9.

Every miracle, in fact, which the New Testament Scriptures record, is a separate and distinct proof of the truth, not only of these Scriptures themselves, but of the whole Bible. Jesus Christ gave his sanction to the Old Testament; the apostles preached by his authority: the same reasons, therefore, which support the truth of his miracles will apply in full force to the miracles wrought before his incarnation, and also to those which were accomplished subsequent to his ascension to glory. The multitude and variety of these miracles present the

evidence to our view, in as tangible and cumulative a form as we could possibly desire. "And he who enters the field of revelation with an unprejudiced mind, will find the demonstration of its truth from this source as satisfactory, as powerful, and as overwhelming, as that which presents itself to him who walks abroad amidst the scenes of nature, in search of the manifestation of nature's God."

Should the enquiring reader doubt the correctness of this conclusion, or be at all disposed to question the connection there is between the reality of the Christian miracles and the truth of the Christian Scriptures, I request his candid attention to the following illustration, which bears upon the subject, and will tend to convince him that the inference which in this respect I have drawn is both natural and correct. Suppose that a company of wicked impostors agree to forge, and circulate through the country, a letter in the King's name, containing a variety of commands and instructions, to which all his subjects are required, on pain of death in case of their omission, to attend; will the King, when he hears of this circumstance, put his seal to, and confirm this infamous and deceitful letter? Will he not rather apprehend, and bring to condign punishment the villains who have been guilty of

so notorious an imposition? Now if it be asked how this simile applies to the subject of our present investigation, the answer is as follows. The New Testament is the letter here supposed. The institutions of the Christian religion, as taught in that blessed book, are the commands and instructions to which all are required to attend; the apostles and others of the first preachers of that holy religion are the persons who wrote and circulated this letter amongst the nations; and the miracles which it records, were wrought (as we have before stated) to attest the truth of this religion; in other words, these were the seal, the *Royal seal*, by which Jehovah, the Prince of the kings of the earth, confirmed the message of these his devoted and faithful servants; and these miracles we unequivocally assert are a standing proof, and will continue to be so through all succeeding ages of the world's duration, that Christianity is a divine religion, and that the Scriptures of the New Testament is a book divinely inspired. For had the case been otherwise, (i. e.) had the apostles and their coadjutors been impostors, and the religion they proclaimed a falsehood; is it, I ask, at all likely that God would have thus publicly sealed their testimony and succeeded their undertaking by communicating to them the power to

work such miracles as these. May we not rather suppose, that he would on the contrary have followed them with some terrible judgment, as the punishment of their impiety and daring wickedness. The inference is plain, the conclusion is *clear*. The God of truth would never endorse a falsehood. Had they therefore been deceivers, their message would certainly never have been thus confirmed; and although in the present time they might have escaped without any special visitation of temporal judgments as the punishment of their sin, yet considering the circumstances under which they laboured, success never would have crowned their exertions. As impostors they never could have surmounted the difficulties they had to contend with, at the commencement of their enterprise; and we may reasonably infer, that in this case, both their names and their labours would long since have sunk into deserved and perpetual oblivion. But when we survey the state of the matter, we find that the reverse was the case: that God, instead of thus visiting them with condign punishment, and frustrating their exertions, in the most extraordinary manner confirmed their testimony, and gave success to their exertions. We must, therefore, if free from prejudice, and open to conviction, be

ready to acknowledge that this divine interposition is a self-evident and indubitable proof of the truth of Christianity, and a confirmation of its evidence so solid, satisfactory, and convincing, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

SECTION 2.

Collateral Observations referring to the Christian Miracles.

On reading the foregoing account of the nature, number, and variety of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, the mind is naturally anxious for a solution to the query, Why it was, if these miracles, according to the statement here given, were so numerous and convincing, that so many of the Jews who perpetually beheld and had an opportunity of examining them, still continued in their disbelief and rejection of the Gospel,* instead of

* A modern writer of no ordinary fame, has a striking observation on the efficacy of miraculous testimony as attached to revelation. "The sceptic," he remarks, "maintains that a real miracle wrought in support of a revelation must be irresistible evidence of its truth, and that if he saw a man raised from the dead he should at once, and of necessity, believe; and the inference he would derive from this proposition, is, that the miracles which were professedly wrought in favour of the gospel could not have been real, since they had not this uniform and certain effect. The Christian advocate has sought to relieve the

being convinced as might naturally have been expected from their being eye-witnesses of the facts recorded? To this I reply, that many of the eye-witnesses of these miracles were, as appears from the testimony of Nicodemus, convinced of the indubitable truth of Christianity; yet they still continued to reject it, not on account of the deficiency of its evidence, but because it was opposed to their worldly views

subject of this difficulty, by shewing truly that the Jews resisted the miracle by ascribing it to demoniacal, and the pagans to magical influence. But it must be conceded that the question still turns upon us. Why did they ascribe it to false and inadequate causes? The reply is, that they were *predisposed* to do so; and we must seek for this predisposition to reject the testimony in the *contents* of the revelation, and the *nature* of man. In ordinary circumstances, it is allowed, that it would be nearly impossible to reject a revelation in the presence of a real miracle; but a revelation may be so opposed to a man's prejudices, interests, and principles, as to make it his highest wish that it were not true; and then it is consistent alike with *philosophy* and *experience* to say, that he would not believe 'though one should rise from the dead.' In such a case, the causes of a man's disbelief are *within himself*; and it is manifest, that if he is to receive the testimony, it must be not by any *external* agency, but by an internal and superior influence disposing him to admit the light and weight of evidence as it *already* exists.

"On this principle, the account presented to us in Scripture of the *variable* success of miraculous testimony, is perfectly consistent; but if it is rejected, the subject is clogged with serious difficulty. If, according to the argument of the sceptic, a miracle is a sole and sufficient cause to induce men to embrace the *truth*, then it ought to have uniform and constant success; and every one who has seen a miracle, *must* have accepted the message

and interests, because it prescribed duties which they were unwilling to perform, and demanded sacrifices which they were unwilling to make. The conduct of those inconsiderate men, though painful to reflect upon, is by no means calculated to excite our astonishment. Multitudes are found in every country, who are ever ready to sacrifice the concerns of the soul to those of the body; and the folly of

which it was sent to confirm. The Scriptures, however, which record these miracles give us a different report of their effect. We find many of the ancient Jews, who witnessed the miracles in the wilderness, turning away from them to worship idols. At a later period, we find Jesus Christ, though working so many miracles, attended by but a few followers, while his apostles in less extraordinary performances after his alleged ascension were remarkably successful. And it is worthy of observation, that the first instance of unusual success in the propagation of the gospel, is ascribed not so much to the miracle which was wrought, as to the sermon which was preached. The miracle excited their curiosity and ridicule, but the sermon went to their hearts: and the sermon, like the miracle, relied for its success on the power of the Holy Spirit, which was then 'poured out from on high.' (See Acts, Chap. ii.)

“Miracles are in fact rather of the *order of means*, than the *order of causes*; and like all means they may be used to contribute to a result, which of themselves they could not secure. They are a sufficient reason why men should believe, that they may be left ‘without excuse,’ but they have not power to constrain their faith contrary to their inclinations. The truth may be rejected in their presence; and if it is accepted, it is by an influence distinct from them—an influence, which, like the wind that bloweth, though hidden from our sight, is one of the mightiest and most important elements of the moral world.”

men in rejecting the gospel, and preferring the interests of time to those of eternity, we must, if we are ~~observant of~~ their habits and pursuits, acknowledge to be a fact of common and every day occurrence. Exclusive of the characters who rejected the gospel on the afore-stated principle, there were doubtless others, who had an opportunity of witnessing the miracles recorded by the evangelists, but who still continued in the neglect of its truths and injunctions, because they never duly considered the matter, or attended with seriousness of mind, as they ought to have done, to that weight of evidence which is derived from them in support of its divine authority.

We see the modern Jews, in the present day, acting in this respect precisely on the same principles as their ancestors did. "These deluded people have existed as a separate community, marked with unequal peculiarities, from the time of their dispersion, not forty years after the ~~affirmed~~ crucifixion of Jesus, down to the present day. They unanimously acknowledge that Jesus Christ lived at the time which the Gospels specify; they know likewise that the terrible destruction of their nation took place soon after that period; they are moreover fully aware that Christians unanimously receive Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures, and that they as unanimously ascribe all the unparalleled calamities which have befallen them as a nation to their not receiving him in the same character. Now we should naturally suppose, that with the knowledge of these facts, and all the incidental circumstances connected with them, that they would at least give the subject some degree of serious consideration, that they would at least examine on what the claims of Christ to the Messiahship are founded. But, instead of doing this, (with a very few exceptions) they obstinately persist in rejecting him. In vain is evidence laid before them on this subject; in vain are they solicited to examine it. The pertinacity of their unbelief, and their indifference to the subject pervert their understandings as well as harden their hearts. Their rabbinical traditions and legends, though puerile to a degree scarcely credible, they receive, (just as the Hindoos do their Shastras,) with a perfect surrender of even common sense; whilst to the sober and rational arguments on which Christianity is founded, they are totally indifferent and impervious."

This neglect of the evidences of Christianity, (which arises partly from enmity, and partly from apathy and indifference,) is not

however peculiar to the Jews. It is a sin which prevails more or less in every part of the world ; and it is undoubtedly to be attributed to the prevalence of these dispositions of heart, that the majority of the human race still continue to disbelieve and reject it. For the confirmation of the truth of this assertion, I have only to refer the reader to the conduct of the Natives of this country. The truth or falsehood of a religion, it must be acknowledged, involves the most awful and important consequences; now although they are daily told this, and told likewise that the religion to which they now adhere is false, and the one which is revealed in the Bible alone is true; and that if they reject the latter, and continue in their adherence to the former, their ruin in the eternal world, as the consequence of their conduct, is inevitable ; yet notwithstanding this, the great majority of them, as is evident from observation, still go on from day to day, manifesting the most astonishing apathy and indifference to all that is brought before them on the subject, without so much as once examining the evidences by which the two religions support their respective claims. We are, from the multiplicity of these painful facts which come before us, necessitated to acknowledge, that it is immaterial how weighty

and convincing the evidences of Christianity may be in themselves, if these evidences are not candidly investigated. If a due and serious attention is not paid to them, and if the mind is not sufficiently free from prejudice, and open to receive the conviction which their clearness and sufficiency are calculated to produce, no beneficial effect can be expected to follow. And it is not, as it respects the truths of the gospel, greater weight of evidence, but a candid investigation of, and due attention to that evidence, which is wanted to produce conviction in the mind, and induce the enquirer to receive it.

Perhaps it may be observed, on the other hand, if notwithstanding the infidelity of some persons, numerous instances can nevertheless be brought forward of the beneficial effects which resulted from the miracles of the gospel in the first ages of Christianity, why have they not for these reasons been perpetuated and continued to the present day? To this I reply, that the perpetuity of miracles would be calculated to destroy their effect, and deprive them of that beneficial influence which arises from them, when they are only occasionally permitted. For instance, suppose the sun were to discontinue his visits to the earth for the space of 100 years, and the inhabitants

during this period had no other light but that of the moon. Suppose that at the expiration of the 100 years, the sun were again unexpectedly to visit the earth ; the inhabitants then living, not having previously seen him, would consider his appearance as a most wonderful miracle: but being, as they now are, daily favoured with his visits, no astonishment is excited, nor any thing miraculous supposed to be connected with his appearance. So, to apply this illustration to the subject before us, if we daily saw the dead reanimated and raised to life, the blind restored to sight, and men cured in a supernatural way of the most obstinate and dangerous diseases, the commonness of these events would destroy the idea of any thing miraculous being connected with them ; and however extraordinary they might be, we should nevertheless look upon them with as much indifference, as we now do upon the most ordinary occurrences of common life.

I further observe, that as it respects the truth of Christianity, all we can possibly require is sufficient evidence ; leaving the nature and degree of that evidence, as it is proper we should, to the wisdom and goodness of God. Provided this is given, the reception of it becomes our necessary duty. On this principle, therefore, I hesitate not to assert, that

the evidence for the divine authority of Christianity, which we have from Scripture testimony and other sources, is abundantly sufficient to remove all our sceptical reasonings, to satisfy all our reasonable enquiries, and to lead us, under the conviction of its indubitable truth, to bow with reverence and submission to its supreme and universal authority. . .

The circumstances in which the persons to whom the gospel was first addressed were placed, were very different from ours. The evidence arising from miracles was then, if not the only, at least the most satisfactory and convincing evidence which they could receive. But in the different situation in which we are placed, the evidence arising from indubitable testimony, the completion of the canon of Scripture, and the conviction which the high tone of its moral precepts is calculated to produce, and the firm establishment which the Christian religion has now obtained in the world, are sufficient evidence for us, and therefore the continuance of miraculous interference is now altogether unnecessary.

In reference to this latter observation, viz. the firm footing and wide spread which Christianity has now obtained in the world, I request the reader's attention to the following illustration, which I bring forward to shew,

that miracles are no longer required to promote its interests. When a little child is first learning to walk, it is supported, assisted, and directed in various ways by the parent, as its strength and present state of progress may require : but when the child has learnt to use its limbs, and obtained strength sufficient to walk alone, these extraordinary means, being no longer necessary, are of course discontinued; and it is left to pursue its own course in the exercise of the ability which it has acquired. So the Christian religion, at the period to which I refer, was as it were but in the infancy of its days ; and, like the little child just spoken of, it then required for its confirmation and establishment, the extraordinary and miraculous support which attended it : but as it has now obtained a firm footing in the world, and as its divine authority is abundantly proved by the most satisfactory testimonial and moral evidence, consequently miracles being no longer necessary to aid its progress, or establish the truth of its claims, are, on account of their further inutility, as might naturally be expected, wisely discontinued.

SECTION 3.

Of the Hindoo Miracles.

As the human mind is fertile in raising objections against the divine authority of Christianity, it is not improbable but that some persons, under the influence of this unhappy disposition, may endeavour to invalidate the weight of the evidence for its truth brought forward in the foregoing section, by saying, that the Hindoo Shastrus contain various accounts of wonderful and astonishing miracles, which have been wrought by their moonees, debtas, and other persons; and therefore the evidence for the truth of both religions stands upon the same foundation. To this objection I reply, that although such accounts are contained in the Hindoo Shastrus, yet they are deficient in proof as to the truth of the facts recorded; that is, the fact of such miracles having actually been wrought is not sufficiently authenticated; and therefore we cannot injustice be charged with a breach of charity when we assert, that as the accounts of these miracles cannot be substantiated, they are, we have reason to believe, merely vague statements, which have no foundation in truth. It was extremely easy for any person, placed in the

circumstances in which the Hindoo legislators, and other noted characters among them are represented to have been when they wrought their miracles, to impose upon an ignorant populace, and make them believe that a miracle was wrought, when no such thing was actually the case. The people before whom these miracles are said to have been wrought, were extremely ignorant ; they highly venerated their legislators ; they were entirely devoted to their interests ; they implicitly relied on all their instructions, and were inclined, without examining for themselves, to believe the whole of what these legislators told them : and the legislators, being undoubtedly men of abilities, and conscious of the prevailing credulity, could for the better establishment of their own authority, easily take advantage of it by thus imposing upon the people. Impositions of this kind have frequently occurred in Roman Catholic countries. The people in these countries are generally very superstitious, have a high veneration for, and are entirely under the dominion of the priests : and the priests, taking advantage of these circumstances, have frequently imposed upon their credulity, and repeatedly deceived them by a variety of pretended miracles. It is satisfactorily proved, from the state and conduct of many

of the inhabitants of this country in the present day, that the senses of a weak and credulous people may in various ways be easily deluded. We see them make an idol of stone, or wood, or clay, which is, as every man of understanding will allow, nothing but a mere senseless block ; and yet many of them actually believe, that by the ceremonies of consecration and incantation, life is imparted to this idol. The spirit of the god, they say, after these ceremonies, takes up his residence in it : and this delusive idea, operating upon their fancy, actually leads them to believe, that whilst engaged in acts of worship, they can see the idol's features change—his limbs move—and signs of sorrow and of joy, of approbation and disapprobation, in his countenance : and in various other similar ways do they suffer themselves, through the influence of imagination, to be deceived and imposed upon, contrary to the evidence of their senses.

The accounts of the miracles which are said to have been wrought by the Hindoo legislators and others, will bear no comparison with the accounts of the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, which are recorded in the Christian Scriptures. The Christian miracles were not wrought before a credulous people—a people devoted to the interests of those who

wrought them, and inclined to believe all that they asserted. If we diligently peruse the evangelical history, we shall find that it was quite the reverse: they were wrought, as we are there informed, before the most inveterate enemies—a prejudiced people, a persecuting government, and a wicked priesthood, whose great object was to overthrow the cause which the men, by whose instrumentality these miracles were wrought, had espoused. But all who are said to have witnessed the Hindoo miracles, were friendly to the cause which their legislators and other celebrated characters, the pretended workers of these miracles, designed to propagate. The Christian miracles were also wrought, at the introduction of the gospel into the world, with a design to effect its establishment, when no person believed it, but when all classes, from the highest to the lowest, were opposed to and inclined to persecute it. But the Hindoo miracles, (if any such miracles ever were wrought,) were wrought not to establish that religion, but after it was established, and had gained a firm footing in the world. The miracles of Christianity were wrought to establish a religion which none were desirous to receive:—those of Hindooism, when that religion was established, and all had received

it. The former were all of the most benevolent and holy kind, were never wrought for display, or to effect any private end, and were therefore in every respect worthy of their great Author :—but the latter were wrought upon very different principles, and for very different purposes; they were wrought in revenge, for display, or under the influence of some self-interested motive,—not, as the Christian miracles, to save men's lives, but to destroy them. They are also, as it respects the majority of them, connected with some kind of obscenity or another; whilst others are ridiculous and childish, and of such a monstrous and absurd nature, that they are utterly unworthy of the divine interposition, and therefore no possible credit reasonably can, or ought to be attached to them.*

For these causes, therefore, on the ground of reason and common sense, I am necessitated

* We are told, that one of the debtas with a plough threw Delhi into the river. Others churned the sea, using a serpent instead of a rope, and a mountain for a churning-pole. The seas of which the Shastrus speak were all, it is said, dug by the sons of one man. One debta drank all the water of these seven seas, and left them completely dry; and another drank all the water in the Ganges. A variety of other miraculous stories of a similar nature are recorded in the Shastrus, so inconsistent and ridiculous, that our compassion is excited towards the deluded people who, refusing to exercise their reason, are so weak and credulous as to believe such monstrous absurdities.

to avow my utter disbelief of every thing which is recorded in the Hindoo Shastras, respecting the miracles said to be wrought by their legislators and other celebrated characters, to whom they attach so much veneration. Admitting, however, that such miracles actually were wrought, Hindooism gains nothing by them; because they were wrought, as before observed, merely in display or revenge, or from some other unhallowed and improper motive, and with no design whatever either to establish its truth, or to prove its divine authority. But on examining the miracles of Christianity, we find them not only altogether distinct in their nature from those of Hindooism, but likewise established on the most indubitable testimony, of which evidence the latter are entirely destitute. These miracles were moreover wrought in attestation of the divine authority of the Christian religion. Whilst, therefore, the miracles of Hindooism leave (even on the admission of their truth) that religion as totally destitute of evidence as it would be without them; those of Christianity, being established on the most solid basis, form around this holy religion an impregnable barrier, and attest its truth in a manner so convincing and satisfactory, that all the arts of reasoning which sophistry and malice have

hitherto brought against it, instead of undermining, have only set in a more striking and prominent point of view, the certainty and glory of its divine original.

CHAPTER III.

ON PROPHECY.

STATEMENT OF THE ARGUMENTS DERIVED
FROM PROPHECY.

The evidence for the divine authority of the Scriptures derived from the prophetic records is peculiarly clear and striking, and admirably calculated to produce conviction in the mind of every serious and candid enquirer after divine truth. It is therefore of great importance, that the prophecies should be exhibited in a clear and perspicuous manner, that the nature of prophecy should be carefully defined, and the bearing of the argument derived from it upon the subject under review be prominently exhibited. My object, therefore, in the introductory remarks to the chapter to which I am now advancing, is, in the first place, to give a clear and distinct definition of what may properly be called prophecy. To this part of the subject I request the reader's particular attention; because it is one of considerable weight, and by which we shall be materially

assisted in our endeavours to conduct the argument before us to a successful issue.

Prophecy, then, it may be remarked, is a revelation of those future and distant events connected with the history of mankind, into which according to the common course of providence it is impossible for the human mind to penetrate. These events being, as they are, contingent, and immediately under the control of the Divine Being, must previous to their accomplishment necessarily remain in obscurity, unless some favoured individual receive a communication from God relative to them, accompanied with instructions not to keep this communication secret, but to make known the whole of what has been thus revealed to him to the world.

Suppose, for instance, that an individual comes forward and asserts that some particular circumstances, which he distinctly specifies, will take place in the town or the immediate neighbourhood in which he resides, at a future given period—say three, five or six hundred years hence. Suppose, when he makes this communication, that he does not lay claim to any superior foresight or sagacity of his own, but asserts that what he thus develops he has received by an express communication from the Deity. Furthermore suppose, that a particu-

lar record is kept of what he advances, and it is found that the event which he foretold actually takes place at the exact period, and under the particular circumstances which he specified ; the people who are then living, and who have that record in their hands, when they behold how the event tallies with the prediction, cannot, I apprehend, without some strong reason withhold their assent to the reality of the fact, that the man who previously made this communication was, according to his own assertion, undoubtedly guided at the time by a supernatural influence. This, then, I beg my readers to observe, is a simple definition of what I consider to be prophecy. It is true, that, in the case I have now supposed, the ever active spirit of scepticism may reply, that the event having fallen out as previously predicted was merely accidental, a fortunate hit, and is therefore, on account of its being a solitary instance, not attested by sufficient evidence to induce us to give credit to the claims advanced by the person who foretold it. But let us go on, and suppose that this individual does not confine his communication to a solitary occurrence, but specifies, and that circumstantially and minutely, a variety of events which are to happen in different countries, and at different periods of the world's future history ;

and suppose it is found, that not in one instance or two only, but that in every case, the whole takes place precisely as he had predicted that it would, our reasons, it must be acknowledged, ought then to be very strong indeed, if we still continue to deny the validity of the claim which he advances to divine inspiration.

But to put the argument in the strongest possible light, suppose that what I have now stated takes place in a number of instances, or in other words, that this occurs not merely in the case of a single individual, but that a number of men evidently sincere and upright in their conduct, specify, or rather I ought to say, that each of them specifies in detail, a vast variety of events, and events too of a very unlikely character, which are to take place in future, and in some instances very remote periods of the world: suppose, moreover, that the persons who make these communications are altogether unknown to each other, that they have lived in different places, and at different periods, and have had no intercourse whatever with each other: suppose that all of them lay an equal claim to divine inspiration, and that on this account the whole of what they advance is minutely recorded, and the document thus furnished carefully

preserved : in addition to these circumstances, let it likewise be supposed that this document is public property, and in the hands of hundreds and thousands of people, and that passing events as they occur are carefully compared with it ; and it is found on the strictest investigation that it contains nothing superfluous, and is in nothing defective, and that every event tallies, and that most minutely, with the antecedent description which they have thus furnished : can any thing, I ask, in such a case, but the most obstinate and determined infidelity possibly induce us to reject their testimony, or justify our refusal to receive the document which has been thus furnished as a revelation from the God who made the world and all things therein, and who in the exercise of his own infinite wisdom hath determined the times before appointed, and fixed to all nations that dwell on the face of the earth the bounds of their habitation ? (Acts xvii. 24—26.) My readers will probably anticipate me, when I assert that the Bible is just such a document, and that in this illustration they have presented to their view the precise nature of the evidence which we derive from its prophetic records, in support of its divine inspiration. I have only, therefore, to ask, that they will do me the justice to take a

fair view of the argument in the form in which I have here presented it, being assured that if they do this, they will at once perceive that the evidence which is derived from this source is too weighty to be superficially passed by, and too solid to be easily resisted. Let it ever be remembered, moreover, that (as intimated in the preceding illustration,) the Bible was not the production of a solitary individual: its writers were numerous, and amongst them no fewer than nineteen laid claim to the spirit of prophecy. Each of these individuals, at different periods, delivered various predictions on a vast variety of subjects and events, so that if the whole were carefully collected, the Bible I apprehend will be found to contain no fewer than five or six hundred distinct prophetic statements. The authors of those predictions tell us, in the most unequivocal language, that they were inspired of God, and their claim to be heard and received in this character is supported by the astonishing fact, that the whole of what they have thus recorded, so far as their statements relate to the past history of the world, has been exactly and literally fulfilled; and this literal fulfilment of every incidental circumstance ought to be received, and ever will be received by the unprejudiced mind as an unequivocal and undeniable evidence that

the Scriptures are what they profess to be—the word of the living God.

I now pass on from this definition of prophecy, and the bearing of the argument which is derived from it upon the subject under review, and proceed to notice what is the apparent end and design of prophecy. "Prophecy," Dr. Collyer has beautifully observed, "was never intended to give man prescience, but to prove that God possesses it." It is not, as has been imagined by some people, designed to gratify our curiosity, by letting us know before hand what is to take place in the world; its object is rather to prove to us, as the predicted events successively transpire, that the whole system of human affairs is under the government of a wise and gracious Being, who from eternity was perfectly acquainted with them, and by whose wisdom and power the whole are so directed and controled, as to be made in various ways the means of promoting his own glory. Besides this, there is also another view which may be taken of the prophetic parts of Scripture; which is, that these prophetic records, as the judicious reader will scarcely fail to perceive, are manifestly designed as a standing evidence, which God has graciously furnished both to the church and the world, of the truth of his own word—an evidence by which

the faith of the former is strengthened, and the unbelief of the latter will be rendered wholly inexcusable. The mystery of providence is gradually developing itself, and every development, as it successively occurs, throws increasing light upon the sacred oracles, and being compared, as it ever ought to be, with these oracles, furnishes us with additional and continually accumulating evidence—evidence of a tangible nature, and which comes within the sphere of our own observation, that the book for which we thus plead has “God for its author, heaven for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its contents.”

Nothing can be more clear and explicit as to the end and design of prophecy, than those words which fell from the lips of the Redeemer, when speaking of the treachery of Judas, “Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe.” This passage may, we conceive, without any unnatural force be applied to every part of the prophetic records, and we learn from it that the whole of the events foretold, whether by Moses, or by the prophets, or by Christ himself, were so foretold, that when fulfilled we might believe that the word, whether spoken or written, was the authenticated word of God. And I think I am not going too far when I as-

sert, that the unprejudiced mind must on this view of the subject be constrained to acknowledge, that the evidence arising from this source is of such an overwhelming nature, as to render the state of that man utterly hopeless who after a due examination of it still refuses to let go his unbelief. I beg my readers to observe, that I am here speaking more particularly of fulfilled prophecy; the evidence we derive from which may (as an excellent writer has well observed) be compared to a brilliant stream of light darting its celestial rays upon the mental vision—a stream of light striking the eye of the mind, which cannot fail, unless that eye be morally diseased, or wilfully closed, to produce its corresponding conviction.

The following section, therefore, is particularly devoted to the investigation of this class of prophecies; that is, to the exact agreement between the events predicted in the Bible and their fulfilment; and to the argument which is derived from them in support of its claims to divine authority. Give to this species of evidence all the weight which it demands, and to which it is undoubtedly entitled; and it will, I apprehend, appear to a demonstration, that if there were no other evidence in support of its truth, it ought on this ground alone to be received as a communication from the God of

Heaven, and its authority as such to be implicitly acknowledged.

SECTION I.

View of the Prophecies recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

I have proposed to direct the attention of my readers in this section to the various prophecies recorded in the Bible, and to shew at the same time the remarkable manner in which those that relate to past ages have been fulfilled. I shall not however confine their attention exclusively to what is past. The importance of the subject demands, that I should take a wider range, and embrace, as far as may be compatible with the design of the present work, the whole field which in the prophetic page lies open to view. For this reason, therefore, trusting it will commend itself to the judgment of my readers, I propose, in order to render the subject as intelligible as possible, to consider the prophecies in the following order.

First, The prophecies which have been already fulfilled.

Secondly, Those which are progressively fulfilling in the present day.

Thirdly, Those which remain to be fulfilled in future ages.

The majority of the prophecies which have already been fulfilled, are recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and refer to the person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are, however, a considerable number which relate to the various nations of the earth, and the political changes which in the course of providence would take place amongst them. These we shall consider in due order, after those which refer to the person, character and work of the Redeemer, have had that attention which, on account of their interest and importance, they seem primarily to demand.

Simpson, an excellent writer on Old Testament prophecy, has collected no fewer than *one hundred and eight* passages which refer to the Saviour, and pointed out at the same time the evidence of their fulfilment; and these prophecies, although they were written many years previous to his incarnation, are so clear and explicit, that it is scarcely possible to misunderstand them. They are likewise so full and comprehensive, that if I could present the reader with the whole of them, (which is impossible, my design being to select and condense,) he would find on a close examination, that they embody the principal events connected with his life, sufferings, and death.

When impostors assume a prophetic character, their predictions are usually delivered in a general and ambiguous manner; and although some of the prophecies of the Bible are of a general character, yet with the majority, especially the majority of those which relate to the Saviour's incarnation, kingdom, and glory, it is quite the reverse. The sacred writers are minute and circumstantial on these interesting subjects, and, entering as they have done into particulars, their predictions are thereby rendered tangible, are open to investigation, and can with comparative ease be applied to the several events to which they respectively relate. I hope that as I proceed I shall be able to convince the enquiring reader of the truth of this assertion. At least I shall endeavour to do so, by presenting to his view a compendium, or abstract, of the Old Testament prophecies which refer to this subject; and in doing this I purpose to begin with those which refer to Christ's incarnation, and shall afterwards proceed to bring forward in their proper places such others as have a more immediate reference to his ministry, sufferings and death. In order also to make this part of my subject explicit, and if possible easily to be comprehended, I shall state the number of years that each prophecy was written before the particular

event to which it refers took place, and then shew in parallel lines the fulfilment of these predictions as they appear in the history of his life, by comparing them with what the writers of the New Testament, who were eye-witnesses of his humiliation and glory, have written upon the subject.

In Isaiah vii. 14, written 740 years before the Messiah appeared in the world; we have not only an account of his incarnation, but it is in this passage particularly stated, that he would be born of a virgin: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." See following verses.

In Matthew, chapter i. from the 18th to the 25th verse, we are informed that this prediction was literally fulfilled: and this history of his birth is confirmed by the testimony of the other evangelists, especially by Luke, who has particularly enlarged upon this interesting event, in the 1st and also the 15th and the 2d chapters of his Gospel.

In Micah v. 2, written 720 years antecedent to the birth, Bethlehem, a prophecy is recorded with small town in the land of Judea, is stated to be the place where this event, which then occurred, and so intimately connected with the welfare of mankind, would eventually take place.

In the 2d. of Matthew the various circumstances of the extraordinary manner in which by this kind, and other coincident circumstances it was so er-

dered, that his birth (an event which appeared very improbable at the time,) should take place at that town.

In Gen. iii. 15, it is recorded that 4004 years before his incarnation, he was promised as "the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head."

In the 1st Epistle of John iii. 8, this is stated as the express object of his mission to our guilty world: "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;" and the manner in which that prediction was verified, and this important victory achieved, is particularly recorded by the Apostle Paul in the 2d chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, and 14th verse, "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

In Deut. xviii. 15, written 1450 years before he appeared in the world, he is promised as the an-

In the following pas-
sages, viz. John i. 45, Acts iii. 22, and vii. 37, we have so many distinct types of Moses, and the references to the fulfil-
great prophet of Israel: ment of this prediction;
"The Lord thy God and whoever reads the

will raise up unto thee a history of Moses and that Prophet from the midst of the Redeemer, will of thee, of thy brethren, easily perceive that there like unto me; unto him existed in a variety of respects a most striking ye shall hearken." analogy between them.

In Isaiah xi. 1, writ- Matthew, in the 1st ten 740 years previous to chapter of his Gospel has his birth, he is called in traced the Saviour's preference to his lineage, digree back to Jesse, and the rod of the stem of thereby shewn us that Jesse, and the branch this inspired declaration which should spring out was literally fulfilled. of his roots; and in the The same subject is also following verses his cha- noticed in Acts xiii. 22, racter, and the peaceful and the following verses, fruits of righteousness by and also by the Apostle which his reign would be Paul, in Rom. xv. 12. distinguished, are circum- stantly described; to which account I refer the reader, as it is too long for insertion here.

In Isaiah ix. 6, 7, writ- The reference made to ten 740 years before he the Redeemer, Mark ix. assumed human nature, 2, and following verses, we have the following Luke i. 31—34, and Phil. descriptive account of the ii. 9—11, clearly prove dignity of his character, that the Saviour, though and the glory of his destitute of outward kingdom: "Unto us a pomp, fully answered to child is born: unto us a the description of his

son is given ; and the go- glory which is given in
vernment shall be on his these words. See also
shoulder : and his name John i. 14, where the in-
shall be called Won- spired writer, referring to
derful, Counsellor, The this subject, says, " We
Mighty God, The Ever- beheld his glory, the
lasting Father, The glory as of the only be-
Prince of Peace. Of the gotten of the Father, full
increase of his govern- of grace and truth."

ment and peace there
shall be no end, upon the
throne of David, and upon
his kingdom, to order
it, and to establish it with
judgment and with jus-
tice from henceforth even
for ever."

In Isaiah xl. 3, and In Matth. iii. 1—3,
also in Malachi iii. 1. and and also xi. 9—11, and
likewise in iv. 5, the Mark i. 2, 3, John the
former passage written Baptist is referred to, as
708, and the two latter answering to this descrip-
420 years before he ap- tion, and is also stated to
peared clothed in huma- be the person in whose
nity, it is stated that his life and ministry these
appearance would be in- predictions were fulfil-
timated by a messenger, led.
who would precede him
in the power and spirit of
Elias.

Isaiah, describing his The general history f
character in chap. xlii. 2, the Saviour shews how

3, of his prophecies, which literally this prediction were written 708 years was fulfilled ; and the before his incarnation, most superficial reader represents him as meek, gentle, and tender hearted, as conducting his ministry without ostentation or noise ; also as devoid of external pomp, and rather shrinking from than courting popular applause.

In addition to which, the following passages have a direct bearing upon the subject, and ought therefore to be carefully perused. Matth. xii. 10, 21. xi. 28—30, 1 Pet. ii. 22, 25.

In Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6, We have the general written 720 years before fulfilment of what was he left the throne of his here foretold stated in Father's glory, it is not only stated in general terms that he would work miracles, but the peculiar character of those miracles is minutely described : " Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."

Acts ii. 22, and also in x. 38, 39; and the various instances in which it was more particularly fulfilled will be found in the following and other similar passages, with which the four gospels abound. Matth. ix. 27—31. xi. 2—5. xv. 30. xxi. 14. also Mark vii. 32, 35, and Luke vii. 21.

Isaiah, in his prophecy, Let the following pas-

written 736 years before the event referred to took place, foretold that Christ would not be acknowledged by the Jews. He describes him as "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and also as a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence," see Chap. liii. 3, also viii. 14.

In Psalm lxix. 8, written 1020 years antecedent to the Redeemer's birth, it is particularly stated, that he would become a stranger unto his brethren, and be looked upon as an alien by his own mother's children.

sages be carefully perused, via. John i. 11. Matth. 37, 38. Heb. v. 7, 8. Rom. ix. 32. 1 Cor. i. 23. 1 Pet. ii. 8. and the reader will at once perceive how strikingly "events with prophecies agree," and he can scarcely refrain (if his mind is open to conviction) from exclaiming, "This is the finger of God."

In John vii. 3,5,6, and Mark iii. 21. the unkind treatment he met with from them who were his brethren according to the flesh is recorded, and agreeing as it does with the description of the Royal Psalmist, evidently proves that he wrote under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit.

In Zech. ix. 9. written 510 years previous to Christ's appearance in the flesh, the manner of his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem is particu-

In Matth. xxi. Mark xi. and Luke xix. we have three distinct and circumstantial accounts of the event referred to in this prophetic declara-

larly described : " Rejoice Zion, with a description of greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy king cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

A very great multitude, we are told, Matth. xxi. 8, 9, " spread their garments in the way ; others cut down branches from the trees and strawed them in the way. And the multitude that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David ; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord : Hosanna in the highest."

In reviewing these prophecies, and comparing them with the events to which they severally refer, the mind is immediately struck with the fact, that the whole were exactly and literally fulfilled, and fulfilled too by the concurrence of a number of diversified circumstances utterly beyond the control of human agency. And if the serious enquirer after divine truth examines the Bible throughout—examines it as he ought to do from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, he will find that out

of the several hundred prophecies which it contains, there is not one,—I say not one, which either has not been fulfilled, or which (judging from the present aspect of the world) is not likely to be fulfilled by forthcoming events. We maintain therefore that if we find certain events predicted long before they happened ; if they be so clearly described, that when completed the description determinately applies to the subject ; if they be related by persons entirely unconcerned in the events, and expecting to be removed from the stage of existence long before they take place, it is then evident to a demonstration that some power superior to humanity has been pleased to impart to them so much of its designs and counsels as are referred to in these predictions. Now, let this argument be brought to bear upon the Bible, and the reader will at once perceive that the record of its fulfilled prophecies stands forth, with the prominence of an imperishable monument, attesting beyond a doubt its divine original.

In order, however, that the propriety of this conclusion may be still more apparent, I shall proceed to notice some other prophecies relating to the Saviour, which are not of so general, a character, but which enter more into detail and contain a more minute description of se-

veral circumstances which took place during the period of his sojourn on earth, and the validity of these prophecies may easily be ascertained by comparing them with the several events to which they respectively relate. These events have all been recorded by the evangelists in the various histories with which they have furnished us of his life, character, and death ; and it will be found in every instance, that the ultimate result tallied, and that most minutely, with the antecedent prediction. The conclusion, therefore, at which we arrive is as follows, (and the reader will do well to bear in mind that it is a conclusion supported by the evidence of the most indubitable facts,) — that the sacred historians were not putting their own thoughts or conceptions to paper, when they recorded the several circumstances to which their prophecies refer ; but that they evidently wrote under the influence of a divine premonition, were guided in all things by the unerring Spirit of God, and have furnished us with nothing that may not with confidence be relied on as the record of eternal truth.

In Isaiah liii. 7, written 706 years before we are told that when Christ's incarnation, his silence before his enemies accused him before Pilate, and accusers is described the Roman Governor of

In Mark xv. 3—5,

in the following words: Judea, he answered them "He was oppressed, and nothing, "And Pilate asked him, saying, "Answerest he was afflicted, yet he ed him, saying, Answerest opened not his mouth: thou nothing? Behold how he is brought as a lamb many things they witness to the slaughter, and as a ness against thee. But Jesus before her shearers sus yet answered nothing, is dumb, so he openeth so that Pilate marvelled." not his mouth."

And to the same purport is the language of the Apostle Peter, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

1 Pet. ii. 23.

In Psalm xli. 9, written 1021 years antecedent to his birth, the base conduct of one of his disciples in betraying him is thus recorded, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

In the 13th chapter of the Gospel by John, the treachery of Judas is particularly enlarged upon, and the fulfilment of this prophecy was accomplished in the base conduct of which he was guilty, when he delivered the Redeemer into the hands of the scribes and Pharisees.

In Zeoh. xi. 12. written 500 years before he assumed human nature, "Then one of the twelve,

In Matthew xxvi. 14 —16, we thus read,

thirty pieces of silver are called Judas Iscariot, specified as the price for which he would be betrayed.

went unto the Chief Priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."

"In Zech. xiii. 7, written 510 years before his incarnation, the dispersion of his disciples is foretold: "Awake, O sword, against my sheep herd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

In Mark xiv. 50, and following verses, the fulfilment of this prediction is recorded. We there read that when the officers of the Jewish sanhedrim "laid their hands on him," his disciples, conscious of their inability to defend him, and alarmed for the safety of their own persons, "all forsook him and fled."

In Psalm lxix. 21, written 1021 years before he appeared in the world, "when they were come to the inspired penman signifying the Saviour thus writes: "They gave me a skull, they gave him gall for my meat, and in vinegar to drink mingled my thirst they gave me with gall, and when he vinegar to drink."

In Matth. xxvii. 33, 34, we are informed that a place called Golgotha, that is to say, the place of writes: "They gave me a skull, they gave him gall for my meat, and in vinegar to drink mingled my thirst they gave me with gall, and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink."

In Psalm xxii. 18, written 1060 years previous to his birth, we thus read, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

In John xix. 23, 24, the fulfilment of this prediction is thus recorded: "Then the soldiers, Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore amongst themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be. These things therefore the soldiers did."

In Psalm xxii. 16, written 1060 years before his incarnation, we thus read, "The assembly of wicked men have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet."

In Luke xxiii. 33, it is said that when they were come to a place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, which was done by piercing the hands and the feet to a cross beam appropriated to the purpose, and generally used for putting malefactors to death.

In Zech. xii. 10, written 510 years before he this in John xix. 34,

See the fulfilment of

appeared in the likeness “ And one of the soldiers of sinful flesh, it is re- with a spear, pierced his cored; “ They shall look side; and forthwith came upon me whom they have there out blood and wa- pierced, and they shall ter: and he that saw it mourn for him as one bear record, and his re- mourneth for his only cord is true.” son.”

Again, in Psalm xxii. Matth. xxvii. 39—42, 7, 8, written 1060 years “ And they that passed previous to his humili- by reviled him, wagging tion: “ All they that see their heads, and saying, me laugh me to scorn: thou that destroyest the they shoot out the lip, temple, and buildest it in they shake the head, say- three days, save thyself. ing, He trusted on the If thou be the Son of Lord that he would de- God, come down from the liver him: let him deliver cross. Likewise also the him, seeing he delighted chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others: himself he cannot save.”

In Isaiah liii. 9, 12, Mark xv. 25, 27, 28, we written 706 years before thus read. And it was the he appeared on earth, it third hour, and they cru- is predicted that he sified him. And with him would be associated with they crucify two thieves; wicked men in his death: the one on his right hand, “ He made his grave and the other on his left, with the wicked, and and the scripture was ful- with the rich in his filled, which saith, And

death." "He was numbered with transgressors, the transgressors." "he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

In Psalm xvi. 10, written 1060 years before the event referred to took place, the inspired penman personifying him thus speaks in reference to his resurrection, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

In Acts ii. 24, we are informed that after the Jews with wicked hands had crucified and slain him, "God raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible he should be holden of it." And in addition to this account, we have also the testimony of the four evangelists, that "he rose from the dead the third day," after his crucifixion.

In addition to the prophecies here enumerated, I refer the reader to the whole of the 53d chapter of Isaiah, which describes so minutely a variety of circumstances in the Redeemer's life, that it is more like a history of events that were past at the time of its being written, than a prediction of such as were then to come; and yet in every particular it exactly agrees with his history as recorded in the four gospels. Now in order that this astonishing fact may be

viewed in its proper light, it ought ever to be remembered, that above 700 years elapsed from the time that the prophet wrote this chapter to the period of the Saviour's incarnation. The authenticity of the chapter too is placed beyond all dispute, by the well known circumstance, that the Old Testament Scriptures are to this day in the hands of "all the people of the Jews;" and though they have always manifested the most decided hostility to the Saviour and his cause, and spared no pains to disprove (had it been possible) the divine authority of his mission, still they have not attempted either to obliterate or deny the inspiration of that chapter, although it makes so decidedly against them by the direct and convincing evidence which it affords, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the anointed of the Lord. In fact, the implacable and hostile spirit which this people have so uniformly evinced towards the cause of Christianity, furnishes a strong collateral proof not only of its divine authenticity, but also of the divine inspiration of the whole Bible. For the most inveterate enemy of our cause cannot say, that there was any juggling in the case, that it was a preconcerted plan of the Jews to set up Jesus Christ as the Messiah; and therefore they did such and such things to him merely for the

purpose of supporting his pretensions, and making it appear as though the prophecies were fulfilled in him. I beg to remind the reader, that the grand object of the great body of the Jewish nation was to disprove by any means his claims to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world ; and so determinately were they set upon the accomplishment of this object, that they never for a moment lost sight of it, whilst all that craft the most subtle, and malice the most inveterate, could possibly devise, were unremittingly employed to effect it. Yet that very enmity, and that very malice were so overruled by divine providence, that instead of subverting, they only tended to establish on a firmer basis the validity of his claims. These enemies of his cause had not the most distant idea of doing any thing which should for a moment make it appear as though the prophecies were fulfilled in him. It is true they were themselves the instruments of fulfilling them ; but then, be it remembered, that all this was done not only without any design or contrivance on their part, but absolutely in opposition to their wishes, without their knowledge, and contrary to their intentions. The reader will perceive the truth of this statement, if he reads that remarkable passage which is recorded in Acts xiii. 27, “They that

dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.” This broad assertion, an assertion so much to our point, was made by the apostle Paul before a congregation of those very Jews, soon after the Saviour’s ascension to glory; and these Jews, though distant from the capital, were not in a state of ignorance on the subject to which the apostle referred; they possessed, moreover, ample means of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of the allegation thus boldly advanced against their countrymen; and what is the line of conduct they pursue? They remain silent and inactive, and thus tacitly admit the truth of his charge, without ever attempting either to rebut or by any thing explanatory to account for the fact to which he adverted. And whilst I bring forward this passage to prove that what I have here stated is correct, I beg the reader particularly to remark the peculiarity and strength of the language which the apostle employs. It was not only because they knew *him* not, but in addition to this, “because they knew not the voice of the prophets,” that they thus became unwittingly and unintentionally the instruments of fulfilling in him the

various predictions, which those very prophets had before left on record respecting him.

In concluding therefore my remarks on this class of prophecies, Does it not, I ask, appear, on an impartial survey of the whole subject, that the evidence derived from this source is fully sufficient to warrant our reception of the Bible as the word of the living God? Nay, may I not go further and ask, Is it not of such a character as to increase the guilt, and render for ever inexcusable the unbelief of the infidel and sceptic? Here are a series of prophecies, extending over a space of 3600 years of the world's history; the first delivered full 4000, and the latter 400 years before the events predicted took place. Those persons, therefore, who advocate the sufficiency of reason are of all men the most unreasonable, when, in the face of such well attested evidence, they make their reason a plea for setting themselves in opposition to the authority of revelation. For what can possibly be more unreasonable than to suppose, that the previous knowledge of these things was attained by human sagacity, or that they were foretold by mere human foresight? The only satisfactory explanation that can possibly be given of the fact, that the world was antecedently furnished with a full and comprehen-

sive description of these events, is to admit that the sacred writers, when they furnished these records, were not guided by their own judgment or imagination, but by an influence from above; in other words, that they were, as stated by the apostle Peter, "holy men of God, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21.

I now advance to another class of prophecies which the Bible contains, viz. the prophecies which refer to the state of various nations of the earth; their rise and fall, and the several changes which either have taken place, or which it is predicted will take place amongst them in future ages of the world. And in doing this I shall endeavour to shew, that the whole of these predictions, so far as they refer to past and present circumstances, have either received an exact and entire fulfilment, or that they are visibly fulfilling at the present time, in the several transpiring events by which the era in which we have the happiness to live is so remarkably distinguished.

It is acknowledged, that in human governments a king may, if he pleases, acquaint any part of his subjects with his intention, that after such an one has been governor of a province for so many years, he then purposed that he should resign the reigns of government

and be superseded by another; or, in other words, that after *A* has held his office a certain number of years, *B* shall succeed him; and if there is nothing strange or uncommon in this when applied to human affairs, why should we suppose such a line of conduct incongruous or improper, when adopted and acted upon by the great Governor of the universe. It is a fact beyond dispute, that there is a power which governs the world, and regulates the affairs of mortals—a power which frequently raises one nation to a supremacy over the rest, and which acting on the same principle exalts one individual in that nation, and invests him with an authority which is supreme, and to which his fellow mortals are obliged to submit. And when that nation, with the exalted individual who has been at the head of it, have answered the end which providence designed by such an exaltation, the scene is then not unfrequently reversed: the same providence then transfers the sceptre of rule to a stranger, and raises from obscurity into reputation and splendour another person or another people, maintains this during its appointed time, and when that time is expired suffers it gradually to decay or directs a new ambition to wrest from its enfeebled hand and its palsied head the ensigns of royalty and the tokens of dignity. Now to

an unreflecting mind, these circumstances may appear to be purely accidental, but not so to the man who recognises the world to be under the government and control of a wise and gracious God. It is “He who wings an angel, guides a sparrow,” and whoever may be the agents by whom these changes are brought about, they are but instruments in His hands. It is He “by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice.” Prov. viii. 15. “It is the Most High that ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” Dan. iv. 17.

That changes such as I have here alluded to have taken place, and still continue to take place in the world, is a fact well authenticated both by ancient and modern historians, and such as no man of observation and research will I presume attempt to deny. It is not, however, with these facts simply considered that I have to do. My object is to shew, that various changes and revolutions of this nature were distinctly foretold by the prophets of the Bible, and that every event so foretold as far as the past is concerned, has been literally fulfilled. And should I succeed in establishing my position, and in making my ground good here, the unprejudiced reader will not I trust refuse to acknowledge; that in so doing I throw considerable additional weight

into that scale of evidence, by which it has already been sufficiently proved, as I hope to every candid mind, that the Bible is the word of God.

This subject, however, presents so wide a field of investigation, that I find it impossible to enter fully upon it, compatibly with the design of the present work. All that I can do is merely to give a brief outline or epitome of the prophecies which properly belong to this class, and which naturally come under this division of my subject.

*Of the Arabians.**

The first of the prophecies of this character which come under consideration relates to the Arabs. It was delivered 3700 years ago, and is to be found in Gen. xvi. 11, 12, and xvii. 20: "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, (that is, unto Hagar, the mother of Ishmael,) Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and

* The subject enlarged upon in the following pages will I fear be found very uninteresting by a large portion of the Hindoos of the present day, and perhaps be but very imperfectly understood by them; but (as I have stated in the preface to this work) I have partially written in anticipation of the future. If the English language continues to spread as rapidly as it has done latterly, we have every reason to believe that numbers of them, fifteen or twenty years hence, will be sufficiently advanced in knowledge to understand and appreciate this part of the prophetic argument.

shalt call his name Ishmael. He will be a wild man ; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren. I will make him fruitful, and multiply him exceedingly; and, I will make him a great nation." Now Ishmael, the person here referred to, was undoubtedly the father of the Arabs. This appears not only from the uninterrupted testimony of history, but likewise from their own testimony, and is supported by the following incidental circumstances; viz. that in consequence of Ishmael having been circumcised they also practise the same rite, and usually do it at the age of 13 years, the period when he was brought under that ordinance. Ishmael lived in tents in the wilderness and so do they: he was renowned for archery, and they are known to excel in the same exercise; and as he was a wild and independent man, so they also are wild and independent in all their habits and manners. If the reader, therefore, will attend to the following remarks, he will perceive that the foregoing prediction presents to our view a kind of epitome of the leading features of the Arab character, and likewise glances at the principal outlines of their national history, from the period in which it was written down to the present time.

1. It is said that he would become a great nation: "I will multiply him exceedingly, and make him a great nation;" and he has, that is, his descendants the Arabs have, become a great nation, and they continue to be so comparatively to the present day.

2. It is stated that he would be a "wild man;" and it is scarcely possible for a person to look in the face of an Arab without perceiving how fully he answers to this description. There is about this people a kind of wild and fierce appearance, which indicates that their general character, (at least if the countenance is to be taken as the index of the mind,) accords with what is here stated. In addition to this, their roving habits of life, (for we are informed by travellers they have no permanent abode, but wander continually from place to place,) shew with what propriety this term may be applied to them, and are sufficient to convince us, that none but Omniscience could have dictated the prophecy.

3. We are told that Ishmael would maintain a state of continued and uninterrupted independence: "He shall dwell in the presence of his brethren;" and it is an astonishing fact, that the Arabs are perhaps the only nation on the face of the earth, that have not at some period been subdued by a foreign power.

This fact is the more remarkable, when we reflect on the numerous and formidable enemies they have had to encounter: Sennacherib, King of Assyria; Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; Cyrus, King of Persia; and also the Greeks under Alexander, and the Romans under Pompey, and Trajan, severally invaded their territories, and made dreadful ravages amongst them, but were never able to subdue or dispossess them. Their independence, it is remarked by an intelligent writer, has been proverbial both in ancient and modern times, and they remain an unconquered and independent people to the present day.

The 4th and last part of this prophecy states, that Ishmael would be in a state of continued hostility with his surrounding neighbours, "His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." And it is a well attested fact, that these words give a correct description of the Arab character. Gibbon, that arch enemy of the Bible, speaking of them, says; "They are armed against mankind;" and Bishop Newton observes that "they live in a state of continual warfare with the rest of the world, and are both robbers by land and pirates by sea." Several ancient nations, especially the Romans, were particularly exasperated against them on this account, and made a vigorous though unsuccess-

ful attempt either to exterminate or subdue them; and their character in this respect as it appears from the testimony of the above writers, still remains unaltered. The present generation continue to maintain the wild and lawless habits of their forefathers. Travellers, we are told, are never safe in their country, and are always obliged to go, not only with arms, but in large companies or caravans, in order to their security. Thevenot, as quoted by Newton, informs us, that they justify their robberies by alleging the hard usage which their Father Ishmael received from Abraham, when he was turned out of doors; on which occasion they say God gave him the open plains for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there. They consequently never speak of their acts of plunder as robbery, but change the term, and instead of saying, *I robbed* such a man, they say, *I gained* such a thing from such a man.

Now, do we not evidently perceive in this combination of circumstances the exact agreement of the prophecy with subsequent facts? This agreement must be accounted for in some way; and how is this to be done? Serious and candid reflection tells us, that it can only be done by implicitly and unequivocally acknowledging the hand of Him "who sees

the end from the beginning." These people are in fact a standing monument of the truth of the divine predictions, and the veracity of Scripture history. We have here ocular demonstration to our faith ; and if we wish to give unto the Most High the glory due unto his name, we shall certainly be compelled to acknowledge that this is his doing, and that his *truth* as well as his mercy endureth forever.

Of the Egyptians.

The country of Egypt has for its Hebrew Scripture word, Mizraim, because Ham the father of Mizraim, from whom the Egyptians descended, it is thought, occupied it at the time of his birth. It is the first of the kingdoms distinguished in ancient records ; and some of its pyramids are striking monuments of art. They have already stood the ravages of time for more than 3000 years, and will probably remain to the "great burning day." Egypt was formerly a very powerful kingdom ; this is evident from the immense force which Shishak, one of its kings, brought up against Judea in the time of Rehoboam. It appears that on this account it was elated with pride ; at least, the particular sin with which it is charged in the Scriptures is, that it "exalted itself above the nations ;" and its consequent subju-

gation and debasement is the principal theme of the Scripture prophecies respecting it. The prophecies therefore of Ezekiel, which were uttered about 2400 years ago, must have been very striking, and admirably calculated to impress the mind of all who saw it in its original splendour and glory. The substance of these prophecies is as follows: that it should become “a base kingdom,” or rather “the basest of kingdoms,” Ezek. xxix. 14, 15; that it should be diminished, and no more exalt itself above the nations, and the pride of its power should be brought down, Ezek. xxix. 15. xxx. 6; that the sceptre should depart from it, and that it should no more be governed by a Prince of aboriginal extraction, Zech. x. 11. Ezek. xxx. 13.

We proceed therefore to consider the extent to which these predictions have already been fulfilled.

1. It is stated that Egypt would be a base kingdom, the basest of kingdoms; and this part of the prediction has been fulfilled in a variety of respects. For instance, it has become base in having been subjugated not to one merely, but to several foreign powers. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Mamelukes and Turks, have successively subdued and held it in subjection.

It has also become base because of its servility. A French writer who accompanied Buonaparte thither, says, "When Alexander visited Egypt, its inhabitants were then much inferior to their ancestors: they had also lost much of their national character, and under the tyranny of the Persians they evinced the gloomy disposition of a cheerless and cowardly slave."

Again, the people of this country may be considered base on account of their superstition, and the contemptible objects to which they render or have rendered religious worship. Dogs, sheep, cats, and other animals, have all been held sacred by them; and to deify and worship animals, and in fact any thing but the true God himself, is considered exceedingly degrading and debasing in the view of the inspired writers: see Isa. lvii. 3—9, where the prophet represents the Israelites as having by their idolatries debased themselves even unto hell. When Cambyses, King of Persia, wished to obtain possession of one of the principal towns of the Egyptians, he placed a large number of these animals in front of his army, in consequence of which not an Egyptian would cast a javelin, and the town was taken.

The description which the prophet has given of them in the above passage, will also be found true if their general character is consi-

dered. Strabo, Lucian, Athenaeus, and Polybius, whose histories were written before or about the time of Christ, describe them as a superstitious, luxurious, faithless, fallacious people, lovers of wine and strong drink, and malicious, dishonest, pretending one thing and meaning another; and these things, it must be acknowledged, always characterise a base nation. This baseness has, moreover, been perpetuated amongst them: hence Thevenot, a modern traveller, when speaking of them says, they are exceedingly wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypocrites, sodomites, robbers, treacherous: and Bishop Pococke describes them as malicious and envious to a great degree; and the love of money, he remarks, is so strongly rooted in them, that there is no act of wickedness which they may not be bribed to commit, and they think that the greatest villanies are expiated when once they have washed their hands and their feet.

2. It is stated that Egypt should be diminished, the pride of its power brought down, and that it should no more “exalt itself among the nations.” During the time of the Ptolemies it was in some measure exalted *amongst* the nations, but not above them; and never, since the time that these prophecies were written, has it been thus exalted. Amidst the

vicissitudes to which all human affairs are subject, it is no wonder that the Egyptians should suffer humiliation; but that the pride of their power should be brought down, and so brought down as to rise no more, could certainly be seen by no eye but that of Omnisience.

The 3d branch of this prediction states that the sceptre should depart from Egypt, and that it should no more be governed by a Prince of aboriginal extraction. There shall no more be a Prince of the land of Egypt. Now history informs us, that Oehus, King of Persia, invaded the country about 350 years before Christ, and drove Nectanebus, the last ruler who was an Egyptian by birth, into Ethiopia, and became absolute master of the country: and from that period down to the present day, it has always been subject to a stranger, and never governed by a king of its own. Volney, though a decided enemy to revelation, when speaking of its present state, says, that every thing the traveller sees and hears in Egypt, reminds him that he is in a country of slavery and tyranny. On reading therefore the above prophecies, and the illustrations of their fulfilment with which these writers have furnished us, we can scarcely fail to perceive how clearly the designs of God, as revealed in prophecy,

are determinate of his movements in providence; and what a beauty and harmony are developed in their combination. Both are one in character, both are coincident in purpose, and every where marked by unity and agreement; and whilst the movements of providence throw light upon the sacred page, the latter enables us to trace all these movements, and the great events by which many of them are distinguished, to their true source; and by the illustrations with which they furnish us of the fulfilment of its prophetic records, they at the same time throw as it were an impregnable bulwark around its truths, and prove to our infinite satisfaction and delight, that the God of nature and of providence is also the God of the Bible.

Of the Moabites.

The prophecies respecting this people were delivered about 2450 years ago, at which period they appear to have been in all the pride of their glory. The substance of these prophecies is as follows: "Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord." Jer. xlvi. 42. "I have heard the reproach of Moab, whereby they have reproached my people. Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Is-

rael, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, the breeding of nettles and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation." Zeph. ii. 8, 9. "The spoiler shall come upon every city (of Moab,) and no city shall escape : the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken." Jer. xlvi. 8.

These prophecies embrace two objects: the first of these is, that the Moabites would in the course of time cease to exist as a nation; and secondly, that their country would become a perpetual desolation, and their then flourishing cities be destroyed.

The internal commotions which took place amongst these people soon after this prophecy was recorded, were the first step which tended to bring about the fulfilment of the former of these predictions. They became discontented and weakened by differences of opinion amongst themselves, in consequence of which separations and divisions took place, and about the third century after Christ they became so entirely extinct, that from that period down to the present time they have altogether ceased to exist as a nation. As to the latter prediction, that "Moab should become a perpetual desolation, and its cities laid waste," the fulfilment of this is abundantly testified by various intelligent travellers, who have endeavoured to

explore it. Captains Irby and Mangles speak of it as a deserted country, and at the same time observe that its desolation is the more remarkable, because the soil in general is rich and capable of a high state of cultivation; and although it had when this prophecy was uttered many populous and flourishing cities, yet not a single city of this character is now to be found within its borders. The place where many of these cities and towns once stood, are marked in Volney's map, and Bureckhardt enumerates about fifty sites of ruined cities. Amongst these he particularly specifies Eldal, as having a number of large cisterns, fragments of buildings, and foundations of houses, still remaining partially entire; and Keith remarks that among the ruins of Meor and Araayr, there are to be found the remains of several temples, sepulchral monuments, and other edifices constructed of very large stones, which in one building in particular were found to be twenty feet in length, and so broad that a single stone constitutes the thickness of the wall. Other travellers likewise make mention of various other circumstances, all calculated to throw light on this part of the prophecy, and to show the extent to which it has been fulfilled. This country seems also to have been remarkable for its plains and its valleys; and

these, as well as its cities, as foretold by the prophet, have all been destroyed, and now exhibit a scene of utter desolation. The Turks and the Arabs have been frequently contending with each other on those plains, and have brought them to entire ruin. They are described by travellers in general as presenting a barren and sterile aspect, without cultivation, and deprived by the wandering Arabs of their natural produce.

Thus it is that God fulfils the threatenings of his own word, by “turning the rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.” Psalm cvii. 33, 34.

Of the Edomites.

The Edomites were the descendants of Abraham and Isaac in the line of Esau. They settled in a mountainous country called Seir, and though as a nation they are now extinct, yet it is sufficiently evident from the numerous references made to them in the Scriptures, that they were once a very powerful and opulent people. It appears that their unkindness to their brethren of the house of Jacob was one of the principal sins by which they excited the anger of the Almighty, and brought down his

judgments upon them: “For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.—There shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it.” Obad. i. 10, 18.

Besides this remarkable prophecy respecting the house of Esau, there are so many others of a similar character in various parts of the word of God, that it is scarcely possible to present the reader with the whole at one view. We will therefore take this first into our consideration, and afterwards select such others as may appear best adapted to throw light upon the subject of our present enquiry.

This prophecy (with several others relative to this country which I shall speedily bring forward) was recorded about 580 or 600 years before Christ. The purport of it is, as the reader will perceive, that the Edomites should cease to exist as a nation: and in order to prove that the threatening has been literally fulfilled, I have only to ask, Where are they, and what part of the world do they inhabit now? The truth is, they are no where to be found; and their very name as a people has long since been cut off from the face of the earth. * During the captivity of the Jews, or about that time, a sedition arose amongst them, and a

party going off from the body of the nation planted themselves south west of Judea, and were afterwards known by the name of the Idumeans. Another party shortly after incorporated themselves with the Arabs, and some others became proselytes to the religion of the Jews; and about the first century after Christ they were so completely scattered, that scarcely any section of them could be traced. The name consequently fell into disuse, and as a distinct nation, they were in the course of a few years after this period entirely lost. The state of this argument is thus expressed by Keith, "While the posterity of Jacob have been dispersed in every country under heaven, and are scattered among all nations, and have ever remained distinct from them all; and whilst it is declared of them that a full end will never be made, the Edomites, though they existed as a nation more than 1700 years, have, as a period of nearly equal duration has proved, been cut off for ever; and whilst the Jews are remaining, in *every* land, there is not in *any* land one remaining of the house of Esau." The fulfilment of this prophecy is ~~so~~ striking and remarkable, especially when viewed in connection with that which relates to the dispersion of the Jews, (and which we shall hereafter consider,) that we are constrained in the

review of it to exclaim with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33.

In the second propheey, which I bring forward relative to Edom, we are informed that the country should become a desolation : "I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah, (*i. e.* Edom,) shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse." Jer. xlix. 13. "Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at the plagues thereof." Jer. xlix. 17. "Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out my hand against thee, I will make thee most desolate. I will make thee perpetual desolations; and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." Ezek. xxxv. 3, 9.

What is in these words stated of Edom, may in some measure happen to any country however flourishing. In the midst of the many changes which are continually taking place in this changing world, every country under heaven is liable to become at some time or other, if not absolutely, yet comparatively a desolation. But the language here employed, as the reader will probably perceive, is pecu-

lly clear and striking, and such as none but God himself with propriety could employ. Observe, it is not merely said, that Edom should become a desolation, but that it should become "most desolate," that it should be "perpetual desolations;" and who but God could thus speak, and preface the prediction with such words of authority as to say, "I will do it"? I trust therefore the reader will with candour acknowledge his hand, when he has perused the following testimonies, and perceives how literally and to what an extent these prophecies have been fulfilled.

The infidel Volney, who travelled upon the confines of this country, says, (though he seems partially to have received his information from the Arabs,) that the whole country is so completely desolate, that it is exceedingly dangerous to enter it on account of the serpents and other venomous reptiles with which it is infested. And Keith remarks, that even the Arabs, whose home is the desert, and whose occupation is wandering, are afraid to pass near it, or to conduct any within its borders. Burckhardt also bears his testimony to it as a desolate wilderness, and says, that when he entered it he was without protection, and where no traveller had ever been before. Sir Frederick Henniker, when he was in that part of the

world, was informed that it was impossible to pass through it, and Jolliffe describes it as one of the wildest and most dangerous divisions of Arabia. The testimony of these travellers is supported by that of Captains Irby and Mangles, who have since visited it, and declare that an Arab tribe positively refused upon any terms whatever to conduct them to a spot that lay within its boundaries. And it must be borne in mind that these writers simply express their own views and impressions respecting this singular land. They had not, (with the exception of the two last mentioned gentlemen,) the most distant allusion to, or perhaps had not even any knowledge of, these predictions. The evidence, therefore, coming from such a quarter, is as unsuspicious and undesigned as it is copious and complete. It is sufficient to convince us, to the fullest extent of our wishes, that Edom is actually a desolation, or as the prophet has expressed it, it is "most desolate," or to use his still stronger language, it is "perpetual desolations." How astonishing is this fact when duly considered, and especially when it is remembered that it is now 2400 years, or more, since these prophecies were recorded. And yet, if we may judge from present appearances, it is likely to continue thus desolate for ages still to

come, and perhaps till the final consummation of all things.

3. It was foretold that the cities as well as the country of Edom should be laid waste : "all the cities of Bozrah shall be perpetual wastes." *Jer. xlix. 13*; and again, verse 20, "The Lord shall make their habitations desolate with them;" and also *Mal. i. 4*, "Edom saith, We will return and build the desolate places (*i. e.* desolate cities :). Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down : and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever."

This prediction, like the others, has been literally fulfilled. *Burckhardt* describes the ruins of a large town, of which nothing remains but broken walls and heaps of stones, and the ruins of several villages in the same neighbourhood; and also of another ancient and splendid city not far distant. And *Volney* says, that to the south east of the Dead Sea, there are in a small tract of country upwards of thirty ruined towns absolutely deserted. Several of these have large edifices that appear to have belonged to ancient temples. The Arabs generally avoid lodging in them ; but occasionally, when travelling in that direction, make use of them to fold their cattle in. Captains *Irby* and *Mangles* also de-

scribed the ruins of what appeared once to have been a very splendid city. The ground round about where it stood, they say, is covered with heaps of hewn stone, foundations of buildings, fragments of columns, and vestiges of paved streets ; also the remains of a palace and several temples. They also speak of a variety of excavated tombs, and other ancient monuments of art, which are now in a state of complete dilapidation. And Macmichael, another traveller, who visited the same spot, represents them as having been richly and fantastically decorated with every imaginable order of architecture. Burckhardt remarks, on viewing these monuments of ancient grandeur, that great indeed must have been the opulence of a people which could dedicate such monuments to the memory of its rulers ; and with equal or more propriety, may we remark, that great and wonderful must be the knowledge of the Almighty ; for who but he could possibly foresee the ruin and utter desolation of such cities as these once were ? And may we not also add to this, that the book in which these desolations were many ages before so clearly revealed, is undoubtedly worthy of our supreme regard, and may confidently be relied on as the word of Hi / who has said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it ; and it shall be no more, until he come whose

right it is ; and I will give it him." **Ezek. xxi. 27.**

4. It was likewise foretold respecting Edom, that no man should abide there, neither should a son of man dwell in it. **Jer. xlix. 18.** "I will cut off from Edom him that passeth out, and him that returneth." **Ezek. xxxv. 7.** "From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." **Isaiah xxxiv. 10.**

Seetzen, a traveller, when at Jerusalem wished to visit this country, but hesitated for some time to do so, because he was informed that he would find no habitation, and that it was never visited except by a few wandering Arabs. Such is its state of desolation *now*, though on account of its locality it was formerly a great thoroughfare for the commercial nations by which it was surrounded. It is from this source that it is supposed to have derived its immense wealth; and it is evidently to this that reference is made in the passage above, "Him that passeth out, and him that returneth;" and improbable as the event might appear when these prophecies were written, that the Lord would thus entirely cut off them that passed out and them that returned, or in other words, the people who for commercial and other purposes were continually passing

through it ; yet such is certainly the fact. No vestige of its former greatness now remains ; and so completely has this prediction been accomplished, that modern writers tell us, that in the present day it can only be skirted. The desolation, they say, is so complete and universal, that it is utterly impracticable to pass through it. Volney particularly states that it has not been visited (meaning I suppose the interior) by any traveller. Whatever view, therefore, we take of this wonderful country, we perceive that the predictions which related to it have been so remarkably fulfilled, that it is almost impossible, with these facts before our eyes, to refrain from exclaiming in the language of admiration and surprise : “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints ! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ?” Rev. xv. 3, 4.

5. The last prophecy which we shall notice respecting this country, will be found in Isaiah xxxiv. 11, 14. “The cormorant and the bittern shall possess Edom, the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it : the wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow ;” also Mal. i. 3. “I laid his (that is Esau’s) mountains and his heritage waste

for the dragons of the wilderness." Burckhardt, though unknowingly and unintentionally, bears his testimony to the fulfilment of this prophecy. The bird Katta, (literally the cormorant of Scripture,) he says, is met with in such immense numbers, and they fly in such large flocks, that the Arab boys often kill two or three at a time by merely throwing a stick amongst them; and Captains Irby and Mangles speak of the screaming of the eagles, hawks and owls, which hovered over their heads incessantly; and Seetzen gives a similar description of the vast number of ravens by which it is infested. Shaw and Volney also, the one a believer in revelation, the other an infidel, both agree as to the reality of the fact. The former represents it as abounding with a variety of lizards and vipers, which are very dangerous and troublesome; and the latter says, that the Arabs generally avoid the ruins with which the country abounds, on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm. These statements, though quite to the point so far as they relate to the subject under investigation, are nevertheless but a small portion of what might be brought forward to illustrate the fulfilment of this part of Scripture prophecy. My intention, however, was only to give a condensed view of the subject; and this I trust, as far

as the prophecies which relate to Edom are concerned, has already been sufficiently done to convince the reader that, the God whom the Bible reveals can when he pleases "declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah xlvi. 10.

Of the Ammonites.

These people inhabited a smaller tract of country, a little above Moab, and north east of Judea. It was a flourishing and wellcultivated country about 2450 years ago, at which period the following prophecies respecting it were uttered : "As I live, saith the Lord God of Israel, Ammon shall become a perpetual desolation." Zeph. ii. 9. "I will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered amongst the nations." Ezek. xxv. 10. "I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching place for flocks." Ezek. xxv. 5. Respecting the fulfilment of these prophecies I remark as follows:—

1. That this country, formerly so flourishing and populous, is now, as it was stated by the prophet it would be, an "utter desolation." Seetzen says, that the ~~whole~~ of it is entirely changed from what it once was, into one vast

and universal desert; and this testimony is supported by the statements of Burckhardt and other travellers, both ancient and modern.

2d. The fulfilment of the prediction which states, that the Ammonites should no more be remembered amongst the nations, took place near 1600 years ago. About that period, a part of them became incorporated with the Arabians and others, with the various sections of Christians which dwelt upon their borders; in consequence of which they soon lost their identity as a nation. In that state they have remained to the present day; and now not any nation, nor any individual of any nation, can trace his genealogy from them.

3. The ruins of several of their once splendid cities, and of Rabbah in particular, has, as the prophet predicted, literally become a stable for camels, and a couching place for flocks. It lies in a line of road frequently passed by the wandering Arabs, who use these ruins to fold their cattle in. Hence Buckingham, a celebrated traveller, and formerly Editor of the Calcutta Journal, speaks of meeting numbers of Arabs with their camels, whilst passing in that direction, and observes that he lay down to rest amongst the flocks of sheep and goats in the neighbourhood of the ruins of Ammon. Burckhardt too remarks, respecting

the ruins of the country in general, that they are very numerous. Some of the stones of dilapidated buildings, he says, are of immense size, and evince that they were very substantial, though, separate from their antiquity, they now present no object of interest whatever.

Of the Philistines.

The country inhabited by the Philistines was situated to the west of Judea. It was a small but powerful state, and seems from the historical parts of the Old Testament to have shewn more hostility to Israel than any of the neighbouring nations. Its principal cities, which were generally large and strongly fortified, were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron.

The following prophecies respecting the abasement of this country were uttered about 600 years before Christ. "The word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks." Zeph. ii. 5, 6. "Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up." Zeph. ii. 4.

Here we are called to notice,

1. What the prophet states concerning the land in general, viz. that it should be destroyed, and that there should be no inhabitant, &c. And it is a remarkable fact, that the infidel Volney, without any reference to this prophecy, furnishes sufficient information in his travels to shew that it has been literally fulfilled. His words are nearly as follows : "The whole country is a barren uncultivated ~~desert~~, and abandoned to the wandering Arabs, who feed their flocks on it," and what is more remarkable, he adds, that in the plain between Ramla and Gaza, (which is undoubtedly the sea coast referred to in the above prophecy,) "there are a considerable number of detached huts in which these Arabs dwell, and where in winter they collect and secure their cattle." The land therefore, according to his testimony, (and no one will believe that he wrote with a view of shewing the fulfilment of either this or any other Scripture prophecy,) is not only destroyed as was predicted ; but, in addition to this, the very part singled out to be a habitation for shepherds, continues to be so to the present day, although upwards of 2400 years have passed away since this prediction fell from the prophet's lips.

2. It was foretold that Ekron, one of its principal cities, should be rooted up, and that

Ashkelon should become a desolation; and the prophecy in reference to the former has been so literally fulfilled, that is, it has been so effectually "rooted up," that travellers are unable to ascertain, with certainty, where this once famed city stood. The site of other ruined cities is marked in several modern maps of Palestine, but in no one is Ekron even named; and as to Ashkelon, Volney speaks of it as a deserted ruin; and another traveller says, "there is not now a single inhabitant within its walls; its once lofty towers lie scattered on the ground, and its once splendid edifices now afford shelter to no human being." How then is the wrath of man, observes the same intelligent and pious writer, made to praise his Creator. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Most assuredly he will, as we may see in the case before us. The oracle respecting the desolation of this once flourishing country, was delivered by the mouth of the prophet more than 500 years before the Christian era, and we behold its accomplishment 1830 years after that event.*

* The Author is indebted for much valuable information relative to some of these once famous cities, to an interesting little work lately published by an esteemed and long tried friend of his in Europe, the Rev. R. Weaver, Mansfield. On one of them

Of Babylonia, or Chaldea.

The name of this country will probably be more familiar to most of my readers, than that of the other places which I have previously mentioned. It holds a prominent situation in the history of ancient nations, and its capital, Babylon, appears to have arisen to such a degree of unparalleled glory and splendour, that in after ages the name of this city was proverbially used as significant of oppression, luxury, and wickedness. Rev. xvii. 5. It is supposed to have been built by Nimrod; but a long period intervened before it attained its subsequent size and magnificence. It was enlarged by Belus; and Semiramis added so very materially to it, that she may not improperly be called the foundress of it. Though travellers partially differ as to its splendour, and dimensions, yet the following account given by Herodotus, is generally supposed to be tolerably correct. "The city was square 123 furlongs every way; it was surrounded by walls 87 feet thick and 350 feet high, and encompassed by a trench every way proportionate to the walls. There were an hundred gates to

however, viz. Tyre, he ~~had~~ ventured an opinion somewhat different from this excellent writer.

the city, 25 on each of the four sides, which with their posts were all of brass: a street answered to each gate, so that there were fifty principal streets cutting each other at right angles, each fifteen miles in length and 150 feet wide; at each of these angles was a square, making together near 700 squares, each square near $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference. The river Euphrates divided it into two parts, (as the Thames does London,) and the junction of the two was by a bridge of admirable structure, about a furlong in length and 60 feet wide. Babylon was also adorned by what have been called hanging gardens, that is, gardens at different degrees of height, raised from the ground on massive pillars; and on the highest terrace where these gardens were laid out was an aqueduct supplied with water from the river, by which the whole were watered. These monuments of art have ranked, and perhaps justly, amongst the wonders of the world. The prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah in the following terms describe the haughtiness and magnificence of Babylon: "The golden city." Isaiah xiv. 4. "The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." xiii. 19. "The tender and delicate;" "the lady of kingdoms;" "a lady;" "a queen forever;" who says "I am, and none else beside me." (Chap. xvii.)

These and other similar terms, altogether peculiar, express her beauty ; and as for her power, she is called "the hammer of the whole earth." Jer. i. 23. "The battle axe," the weapons of war, proper to break in pieces nations, and to destroy kingdoms." Jer. li. 20.

Had we been permitted to behold this vast city when in the meridian of her glory, we should probably (judging from her natural and artificial strength, her extent, and the resources she had at command,) have been ready to conclude that she would have survived the ravages of time, and have maintained her preeminence and stability through all succeeding generations. It is a fact, however, that the proudest monarch who ever sat upon the throne of this perhaps proudest of nations, (see Isaiah xiv. and Jer. i. and li.) was obliged to do honour to the God of heaven, and to acknowledge that those who walk in pride he is able to abase, Dan. iv. 37; and the truth contained in the acknowledgement which was thus extorted from him, was, in the course of a few years after he had passed from the stage of existence, illustrated and exemplified in the humiliation and vassalage to which Babylon was reduced.

The overthrow of this mighty empire was foretold by several of the prophets of the Old

Testament, from 2600 to 2400 years ago; and it is remarkable, that in these prophecies we have not only the general fact relative to its fall, but the circumstantial incidents which took place on the occasion are also stated. These prophecies are however so numerous, that it would probably only confuse the reader were I to present him with the whole at one view; I will therefore, as I have done in the case of Edom, make a separate selection from the mass, and endeavour to shew to what particular circumstance each prophecy refers, and how it was fulfilled, either in the original humiliation, or in the subsequent events which befell this ancient mistress of the world.

1. It was predicted, that this once splendid city should become “a desolation and a wilderness.” Jer. li. 43. “I will sweep Babylon with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah xiv. 23. “It shall become a desolation among the nations.” Jer. l. 23.

Sweeping is a gradual process, a work that is accomplished by a repetition of successive strokes, and in accordance with the figure thus employed by the prophet, the ruin of Babylon was not effected at once but by degrees. Thus inspired prediction first began to receive its accomplishment through the instrumentality of Cyrus; who in the night in which he took it

diverted the course of the river from its usual channel, which so completely inundated one part of the city that it soon afterwards became a stagnant marsh. And Berosus relates, that after he had taken it he demolished a considerable part of the walls, because he was under apprehensions that it would attempt to revolt; and for the same reason Darius Hystaspes destroyed the gates. Xerxes also took down several of its splendid edifices, especially the great temple of Belus. Soon after this period Seleucia, another city, was built on the Tigris, not very far distant from Babylon, which drew away a considerable number of its inhabitants, and tended still more to bring about the desolation foretold by the prophet. In the course of a short time after this, another city, called Ctesiphon, was built in the same neighbourhood. Rollin observes, that this city drew away the few inhabitants which till then remained in Babylon; since which period it has been left entirely desolate. In fact Strabo, who lived about the time of Christ, remarks, that even then the greater part of it was a mere desert; and Pausanius, who wrote about a century later, states, that at that period Babylon, once the "greatest city the sun ever shone upon," had nothing left but a part of its walls; and Lucian, another writer of the same age,

has this striking remark respecting it, “ Babylon is now so completely reduced, that like Nineveh it will soon be sought for and not found;” and remarkable as the fact may appear, such is its actual condition in the present day. This ancient “Glory of kingdoms,” as it is significantly described by Isaiah, is now as a city no where to be found. In short, it has been so completely “swept with the besom of destruction,” that in the midst of the vast ruins that lie scattered over the face of the country, there is some difficulty in ascertaining the exact spot where it stood. Who then, I may ask, when he reflects on its former strength, its extent, grandeur, and apparent security, can contemplate its present desolation, without acknowledging the direct interposition of a divine power, or hesitate to believe that the prophets who so many ages ago foretold its destruction, were directed by the Spirit, and spake by the authority of God? Surely no one guided by the imagined self-sufficiency of his own wisdom, would have had the hardihood to predict the total ruin and entire desolation of such a city. The only reasonable conclusion, therefore, to which we can possibly come, is that the authors of these predictions had unquestionably a commission from him of whom it is said in his own word, “ He bringeth down

them that dwell on high ; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust."

Isaiah xxvi. 5.

2. The following circumstances connected with the fall of this great city were likewise foretold by the same inspired authority : " Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord, and I will make thee a burnt mountain; thou shalt become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons."

Jer. li. 25, 37.

The prophecy which is contained in these words, was partially fulfilled within a century or two after they were written. The language, as the reader will probably perceive, is remarkable. "Thou shalt become heaps,"—heaps resembling in appearance a burnt or barren mountain; and the peculiarity of this prophetic description renders the full and literal accomplishment of it, which has since taken place still more astonishing, and therefore increasingly worthy of our attention. No person can peruse the works of Major Rennell, Messrs. Buckingham, Rich, and other travellers, who in modern times have visited Babylon, without perceiving that these prophecies contain a correct description of its present state of desolation and ruin. Della Valle, who was there in 1616, describes an extensive heap of ruined

buildings so large that they present, he says, at a distance the appearance of a huge mountain; and Mr. Beauchamp, who visited it since that period, speaks of heaps of ruins piled up to an immense height; in fact, so large that they would not, he remarks, be supposed to be the work of human hands, were they not proved to be so by the quantity of bricks found in them. A similar testimony is likewise borne by Kennier, Captain Frederic, and others. Some speak of the burnt appearance of the bricks. Rich in particular says, these immense piles lie tumbled together, and are converted into solid vitrified masses; they appear as though they had undergone the action of fire, or had been blown up with gunpowder. And other travellers relate similar incidents of a different character, all calculated more or less to throw light upon this part of the prophecy. The testimony of Buckingham is very remarkable. He says, that one of the most interesting of these lofty heaps is known by the name of El Mujellibé, which literally signifies, overthrown of God. The latter expression, "thou shalt become a dwelling place for dragons," I shall consider hereafter. The reader will, I trust, be fully convinced by these statements, that the former part of the prediction has at least received its full accomplishment. To my own mind these

well attested facts, and particularly the latter, appear peculiarly clear and convincing; and especially when viewed in connection with the 53d verse of the chapter from whence the aforesaid prophecies are taken. “Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the Lord.”

3. The inundation of Babylon was another distinct part of the prophecy which went forth from the mouth of the Lord against her: “I will make Babylon a possession for the bittern, and pools of water.” Isaiah xiv. 23. “The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.” Jer. li. 42.

I have previously observed that Cyrus, on the night on which he took the city, turned the course of the river, and inundated a considerable part of it; which circumstance tended to bring about the fulfilment of this prediction, as well as that of the one referring to its desolation, to which we have already alluded. The river being thus turned from its usual channel was obstructed by the buildings; and these consequently soon became deserted, and the obstructed water formed around them pools and marshes.

Alexander, we are told, particularly desired to enter that part of the city with his army; but on account of the depth and extent of the water he found it impracticable: and modern travellers agree in their testimony, that the part which now lies west of the Euphrates is full of marshes and morasses. Mr. Rich (Second Memoir, page 10,) says, that the strong embankment built by the Babylonian monarchs, to prevent the river from overflowing, being removed, it has ever since expended itself in periodical inundations at Fe-luja, and the neighbouring places. The inundation, he remarks, frequently covers the whole face of the country as far as the wall of Bagdad, with a depth of water sufficient to render it navigable for rafts and flat bottomed boats. At Hilla numerous canals are drawn from it; but notwithstanding this circumstance it still rises and overflows many parts of the western desert, and in the east it insinuates itself into the hollows and more level parts of the ruins, and converts them into lakes and morasses. If then we take this vast body of water as figuratively used by the prophet for the sea, which may with propriety be done, it may then truly be said, that the sea has come up over Babylon, desolation has overtaken her, and she has, according to the

above inspired prediction, literally become "pools of water." This fact is so well attested, its peculiarity is so truly remarkable, and the evidence which it supplies of the exact fulfilment of prophecy, so exceedingly striking, that we cannot in the review of it refrain from acknowledging that "it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

4. Another part of the humiliation to which Babylon was doomed, is stated in the following words: The "wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant places." Isa. xiii. 21, 22. See also Jer. 1. 39.

This prediction is to be understood, not as referring to the city exclusively, but to the whole of the surrounding country. The purport of the words are, that Babylon with the neighbourhood around should become a den of wild beasts; and whoever wishes to ascertain the extent to which this prophecy has been fulfilled, has only to consult the description which Mr. Rich has given of its present state and condition. Almost every word of this prophecy may be justified from his writings. He mentions his perception of a strong smell like that

of a lion amongst the ruins, and his finding the bones of sheep, goats, and other animals. He says, likewise, that he saw quantities of porcupine quills, and numbers of bats and owls. He also heard that satyrs were to be seen there; and to close the doleful list, remarks, that he was particularly cautioned against proceeding too near after nightfall, lest he should experience the violence of evil spirits. Della Valle likewise speaks of it in similar language, and observes, that the dens of wild beasts are numerous; the satyr, he describes, as an animal resembling a man from the head to the waist, but having the thighs and legs of a sheep or a goat. The Arabs, he says, hunt it with dogs, and eat the lower parts, abstaining from the upper on account of its resemblance to the human species. Mr. Lamb also speaks of having seen a lion amongst the buildings; and Rollin in his Ancient History states, that the kings of Persia formerly had a park in the neighbourhood in which were kept, for the purpose of hunting, wild boars, leopards, bears, deer, wild asses, and other animals. Let the reader therefore contemplate this city as now inhabited by these noxious reptiles, and then let him look back, and in imagination survey her in all the glory of her ancient splendour, and he will immediately perceive

a most striking contrast presented to his mental vision. And when her present state is brought into comparison with her past, how truly and with what propriety may it be said of her, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground! which didst weaken the nations; but thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword." Isaiah xiv. 12, 19.

5. The destruction of the walls of Babylon is particularly taken notice of by the inspired writers: "The wall of Babylon shall fall." Jer. i. 44. "The broad walls shall be utterly broken." Jer. li. 58. "Shout against her round about, her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the Lord, taking vengeance upon her." Jer. i. 15.

The walls of Babylon appear, on account of their magnitude and strength, to have been in a great measure the ground of her confidence; but when a people by sin make God their enemy, and the sentence of destruction is gone forth from his mouth, no prudence, no foresight, no defence, though it be as the munition of rocks, can save them. It appears from the united testimony of history, that the walls of Babylon partially survived the ruins of the city.

Hence we are informed by *Pausanibus*, who wrote in the first century of the Christian era, that whilst the city itself presented to the eye of the spectator one vast scene of desolation, a part of the walls were still standing. Time has, however, ultimately brought upon them the ruin predicted by the prophet; and the vengeance threatened by the Almighty has been so completely executed upon Babylon, that the place where her far famed walls once stood cannot now be ascertained. The attempt has frequently been made to discover their site, especially by Captain Frederic. He commenced his search by riding five miles down the bank of the river and then following the winding sixteen miles north on the eastern side; after which he explored the western bank with equal minuteness. He then proceeded fifteen miles in a north western direction, to a village called Karakooli. He next rode in a parallel line six miles to the west, then as many to the east; but he was at last compelled to return to the place from whence he set out, disappointed in all his expectations. In short, so completely has "the golden city" ceased, "that every effort which has lately been made to discover its outline has failed." Thus the land trembles for sorrow; and every purpose of the Lord has been

performed against Babylon, to make her a desolation, and without an inhabitant. Jer. li. 29.

6. It was predicted that Babylon should be totally destroyed, and no more be a habitation for men. “It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make folds there.” Isaiah xiii. 20. “As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities thereof, saith the Lord; so shall no man abide in Babylon, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.” Jer. l. 40.

This part of the prediction is very remarkable, and therefore worthy of particular attention. It was said of several other places, whose destruction was foretold in Scripture, that the Arabian should possess them; but of Babylon it is expressly said, that they should not possess it, neither should they pitch a tent, nor conduct any part of their avocation as shepherds there; and it is a remarkable fact, that such is actually the state of this ill-fated city in the present day, and we have every reason to believe that it has been so during many ages that are past. The Arabs, it is true, pass near to Babylon with their flocks; but no one takes up his abode there. On the contrary they avoid it

as much as possible, on account of a superstitious idea which prevails amongst them, that it is the haunt of evil spirits. Keppel, who recently visited it, speaking of himself and his companion, says, "We had from the top of one of its lofty mounds a distinct view of the whole country, and a more complete picture of desolation could not well be imagined. The eye wandered over a barren desert in which the ruins were the only indication that it had ever been inhabited." And what renders the fulfilment of this prediction increasingly worthy of attention, is the well known fact, that Alexander formed a design of rebuilding and restoring Babylon to its ancient splendour and magnificence: but the counsel of God shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. Man may propose, but it is God who disposes. The purpose of Alexander was not in accordance with his will. The decree had gone forth from Him, that it should no more be inhabited from generation to generation; and therefore in the dispensation of his providence he thwarted this monarch's design, and prevented him from carrying it into execution. The intention of Alexander was to remodel the empire, and to make Babylon his capital; and with that promptness and decision which usually marked his character, he no sooner came to this de-

termination than he proceeded to the work, and had actually made some considerable progress, when his sudden removal from the scenes of mortality put a stop to it. The work ceased with his death; and since that period no one has ever attempted to restore it. Its desolation is now as complete as can well be imagined. It stands a monument of divine wrath, and judging from appearances it is likely to continue in its present state to the end of time.

7. The utter extinction of the name of Babylonian or Chaldean is the last part of this prophecy which we shall notice, "I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and will cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew." Isaiah xiv. 22. To shew, that this part of the prediction has also been fulfilled, I have only to ask, *Where is the name now?* or, *Where is the son, or the nephew now?* or, in other words, *Where is the descendant, either lineal or collateral, of the proud people who once inhabited this great city?* The truth is, the name of Babylonian is in the present day no where to be found or heard of. It is now 1500 or 1600 years since the last remnant of them became incorporated with other nations; since which period the name has ceased to exist, and they have been totally extinct as a people.

In concluding my observations on the fulfilment of these extraordinary prophecies, it may perhaps be requisite for the information of some of my readers to state a few particulars concerning the taking of this splendid, and as it was then supposed impregnable city; since this was evidently the first step in the history of its humiliation, and the one which led to the various other circumstances by which the whole of these predictions were at length so remarkably fulfilled. If the reader reflects upon the height and thickness of the original wall of Babylon, and the immense trench by which it was surrounded, he will naturally be led to suppose, that in that age, when the use of artillery was unknown, it was not at all extraordinary that the people who dwelt within its inclosure, calculating upon its strength, should consider themselves perfectly secure from any attack of an hostile foe without. It is at least quite evident, that the Babylonians themselves were under no apprehensions of danger. They possessed a large magazine of provisions, sufficient, it is said, without any additional supplies to last full ten years. Presuming therefore upon this, and upon the supposition that the city was impregnable, they derided the attempts of Cyrus; and whilst he

was encompassing it with his army they appear to have been so completely at ease, that they freely gave themselves up to revelling and debauchery. It was on one of these occasions that this great commander (judging it an opportunity suited to his purpose) formed the design of taking the city by stratagem. He received information, that on a certain night which was approaching, the Babylonians would be engaged in celebrating a feast in honour of their principal god. He knew that on this occasion the majority of them would be intoxicated, and therefore as he supposed rendered incapable of resisting him. His plan was to turn on this night, by means of an aqueduct which he had previously prepared, the waters of the river Euphrates, which ran through the city from their usual channel. This he accomplished (keeping his purpose a profound secret) to an extent quite sufficient to render it fordable. He then ordered his troops to enter it in two directions, north and south, and to march up the channel and endeavour to penetrate the city. The river, it should be remarked, was guarded by walls on both its banks of the same strength and height as those by which the city was surrounded, and the avenues from the river walls to the interior were secured by large folding brazen gates,

which it was the common custom to close at night.* Had this regulation been attended to on the present occasion, it is more than probable that the whole scheme of Cyrus would have been defeated. The Babylonians from their walls might have poured down death in a thousand shapes upon their invaders, and the Persians, as Herodotus has well observed, "would have been taken as in a net." But it was so ordered in the dispensations of Providence, that on this very night they were, through the general confusion and riot in which these infatuated people were indulging, with unparalleled negligence left open. In consequence of this the troops of Cyrus penetrated the very heart of the city without opposition. The inhabitants were at the time nearly all overcome with liquor, and not expecting such an assault, were in fact both unfit and unprepared to oppose them. The Persian soldiers flushed with victory, and elated by the advantage they had gained, carried all before them. They put the city centinels to the sword, and reached the palace where the unsuspecting monarch and his nobles were assembled for feasting, almost before the alarm was given, and in that night—"that awful night"—as stated by Daniel the prophet, was

Belshazzar the last king of the Chaldeans slain.*

Let the reader, however, remember, that although Cyrus was thus made the instrument of accomplishing the divine purpose, it was the cruelty and wickedness of these lordly people which brought about their ruin, and induced God in anger thus to consign them to destruction. I beg also to remark, that idolatry took its rise in Babylon; and as this is the abominable thing which God hates, (Jer. xliv. 4.) it seems very probable that it is on this account that this city is in the Scriptures figuratively referred to as “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” Rev. xvii. 5. This abominable thing not only had its rise, but was likewise fostered there, and from thence spread throughout the western world, whilst the liberal arts and the more recondite sciences which were cultivated there with every power of the human mind, were rendered subservient to sys-

* See Isa. xliv. 27, and xlv. 1, 2, also Jer. li. 31 and 39, 41. In these passages the drying up of the river before Cyrus, who is spoken of as God's Shepherd—the manner in which the gates were found open on the night of the assault,—the confusion into which the Babylonians were thrown on discovering unexpectedly that the city was taken at EACH end (as the passage in Jer. li. 31, might properly be rendered,)—the feasting and drunkenness, and the death by which they were followed,—are all distinctly referred to.

tematize and perpetuate it. Whatever, therefore, might have been the specific sins which brought on its ruin, we are sure that this was not the least of them. And its doom must of necessity correspond with its crimes. It is enough for us that we know its punishment to be just, and that we have in the contemplation of its ruins the unequivocal accomplishment of those predictions which pourtrayed its calamities—the monuments of miseries, long deserved but not remitted, though for a time postponed. How true is the sentiment which Solomon has recorded on this subject, “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Eccles. viii. 11. But the longer punishment is delayed the heavier it will be when it does come ; and both guilty nations, and individual transgressors, will find at last, that “reprieves are not pardons.” We see this strikingly illustrated in the case of Babylon. The God whose mercies she abused, and whose threatening she disregarded, at length arose to judgment. Her sins came up in remembrance before him. He then brought forth against her the weapons of his indignation, and gave her to drink of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. Jer. 1. 25. Rev. xvi. 19.

Of Tyre.

Tyre was a famous city of ancient Phenicia. It was particularly noted as a great commercial city, and still more so because of its maritime strength. Salmaneser, the Assyrian monarch, who laid waste several powerful countries, was unable to reduce it. The Tyrians dispersed his fleet, and obliged him, after investing it five years, to retire discomfited from the contest. Though Tyre long maintained a high degree of preeminence among the nations; yet sin, which renders all persons and places alike insecure, at length brought upon it the wrath of the Almighty, and involved it in ruin. The principal reason assigned by the prophet Ezekiel for the destruction of this city, is the manner in which it exulted at the fall of Jerusalem, Ezek. xxvi. 2, "I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste." The displeasure of God against this opulent and haughty city, and his determination to punish her, is expressed in the following language. "Who hath taken counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? Behold the Chaldeans have set up the towers thercof, they raised up the palaces thereof, and he brought it to ruin." Isaiah xxiii.

8, 13. "They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea : for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5. See also verses 12, 13, 14, and 21.

These prophecies were recorded about 2450 years ago; and they are exceedingly striking when the present desolation of this once splendid emporium of eastern commerce is surveyed. Nebuchadnezzar after investing the city thirteen years at length took it, and its destruction appears from that time to have been complete. All the inhabitants were either put to the sword, or led into captivity; the walls were razed to the ground, and it was made a scene of complete terror and desolation.* But

* In reading the prophecies of Scripture, they sometimes appear to be so general in their character, that it is difficult to ascertain to what they determinately apply. When, however, we clearly understand them and enter into their spirit, we frequently see a beauty and minuteness in them which renders them exceedingly interesting, and which produces an irresistible conviction that they are the word of God. See for instance the prophecies specified in the note at the foot of page 152 relative to the taking of Babylon. In Ezekiel xxix. 18, there is likewise a passage of a similar character which refers to the taking of Tyre: "The king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the ser-

the most remarkable part of the prediction is contained in these words, “ I will also scrape her dust from her.” There is evidently in this expression an allusion to some particular circumstance by which her ruin would be characterised. The description it must be perceived, is circumstantial and minute, and is therefore the more worthy of notice, because this part of the prediction, circumstantial as it is, was actually verified in the wars of Alexander, and it was done in the following manner. Soon after the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, (since called old Tyre,) and undoubtedly the Tyre referred to in the passages above, another city, known by the name of new or insular Tyre, was built on a small island about three quarters of a mile from the continent; to this Alexander laid siege about 320 years before Christ, and in order the more effectually to carry on his oper-

ation that he had served against it.” This inspired declaration was fulfilled in the following way. The Tyrians had the superiority over Nebuchadnezzar by sea; when therefore they found resistance useless, and that their city was on the point of surrendering by land, the wealthiest of them embarked all their treasures, and every thing that was valuable in the city, on board their fleet, and passed over to Tarshish and Shittim, that is, to Spain, the north coast of Africa, and other adjacent countries ; (See Isa. xxiii. 6, 12;) consequently when the conqueror took possession of it, he found it nearly deserted, stript of all its wealth, and he received no recompence for his toils. “ He had no wages for his army for Tyre, for the service that he had served against her.”

ations he determined to fill up the space which separated it from the main land, and unite the two by a road, or isthmus. This was a gigantic undertaking. It was however accomplished principally with the rubbish of old Tyre, which was so entirely removed for this purpose that it may strictly be said he scraped the dust from the spot where it formerly stood. And as to its state in the present day, no one can possibly peruse the description of it which has been furnished by various intelligent travellers, without perceiving how exactly it coincides with the antecedent description of the prophet. Bruce, who visited it at no distant period, says, it is now nothing but a barren rock, where ~~fishers~~ dry their nets ; and Bishop Pococke, who travelled in that part of the world, expressly states that there are now no signs whatever of it remaining. Thus has this once splendid and populous city been brought, as foretold by the prophet, to utter ruin ; and what is perhaps even more remarkable than this, is the fact, that it has, as stated in the 14th verse of the chapter from whence the foregoing predictions are selected, “been built no more,” ~~although ages~~ and generations have rolled away since the prophecy which foretold its destruction was fulfilled. In short, we evidently perceive that these predictions have been li-

terally fulfilled, and that in every particular to which they refer. The dust of Tyre, as stated by the prophet has actually been scraped; the spot where it once stood is now barren as the top of a rock; and it has become a place for fishermen to spread nets upon. So far do existing facts agree with the divine oracles, and so far has God in accordance with his threat caused the noise of her songs to cease, and the sound of her harps no more to be heard. Ezek. xxvi. 13.

I have now brought to a close my observations on that class of prophecies which refer more particularly to Heathen nations. There are several other predictions which relate to God's ancient people the Jews, and to their state as a nation, that yet remain to be considered. In reference to those which we have already advanced, my design now is to bring them to bear upon the subject under investigation, by deducing from them, and exhibiting as clearly as possible, the evidence which they supply of the divine origin of the Bible. This, I beg to remind the reader, is the exclusive object at which I am aiming; and in doing this, the following appears to me to be in its present stage the exact state of the argument. Here are a number of prophecies which are very minute in detail; they refer to a multitude of impor-

tant and interesting events which could only be known to God, and which no individual of the human race could possibly have communicated to the world, without having first received a commission from him relative to their occurrence. They were written at various and distant periods of time, yet all of them, long before the circumstances alluded to took place. The writers were men of different habits, education and manners ; they had not, neither could they have, as to the majority of them, any communication with each other, and yet their testimonies invariably correspond ; and the events which they describe, though multifarious and diversified in their character, were without a single exception fulfilled, and that in the most circumstantial manner. Now I beg the reader to observe that the writers of these prophecies, most unequivocally assert that whatever they wrote on these subjects, was written under the immediate direction and by the special authority of God ; and the exact fulfilment of all the predictions which fell from their lips amply bears them out in this declaration, and establishes the truth of their testimony on the broad basis of a series of facts of the most interesting and unequivocal character. It is therefore, by these circumstances proved beyond all possibility of a doubt, that

the Bible (the blessed book in which these prophecies were originally recorded) is the pure, authenticated, and unerring word of God. It is proved by the exact fulfilment of all these predictions to be so, and that not in a general way merely, but absolutely and exclusively, in opposition to the claims of all other shastrus and pretended revelations of every kind. From its authority therefore there lies no appeal; consequently every man upon earth, being as he is a subject of God's moral government, and amenable to him for all his actions, is bound implicitly and with reverence to receive it as the only infallible chart furnished by Heaven, by which he can be conducted in safety through life's bewildering maze, and ultimately landed in that heaven of eternal rest, where the blessed inhabitants experience no night, where they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. *Rev. xxi. 23.*

Of the Jews.

Every thing connected with the past history, or bearing in the least degree upon the future prospects of the Jewish people, is fraught with no common interest, and excites no ordinary emotions in the mind of a serious enquirer after divine truth. He feels that they are

the medium through which the light of life has been communicated to a world lying in the wicked one. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God; of them are the fathers; and from them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Rom ix. 4, 5.

The character and interests of this once favoured people, with the various events which have befallen them, are more or less interwoven with every part of the sacred page; and their history is intimately connected with the past movements, as well as with the future anticipations, of the church of God, and the best interests of a redeemed world. The Jews were originally selected by God as the depositories of his truth; in consequence of which he conferred upon them blessings and privileges of no ordinary character. These privileges, instead of being duly appreciated and improved, were abused and neglected; instead of producing humility and love, they generated pride and self-sufficiency. God therefore, in righteous judgment, at length forsook them; "He gave them up," says the Psalmist, "to their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels." Psalm lxxxii. 12. A state of almost universal apostacy was, as might

naturally be expected, the result of their being thus abandoned of him. Still, however, means were used at various intervals with a view to reclaim them; and though by these means a partial reformation was occasionally produced, yet they led to no permanent result of a beneficial character. Their wickedness continued to gain new accessions of strength, and ultimately rose to such a height, that God determined at once to cast them out of his sight; and in accordance with this determination, in the dispensations of his providence he brought ruin upon Jerusalem, their chief city; broke up their state and polity, and has since that period caused them to be scattered and divided amongst every nation under heaven. In this state of affliction and desertion they remain unto the present day outcasts upon the face of the earth, perpetual monuments of the divine displeasure, living witnesses of the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy, and a standing evidence of the authority and truth of that book in which their history is recorded. It is not, however, with these facts simply considered as such that I have principally to do. My object is to shew that they were previously warned of the calamities which would come upon them, if they wickedly departed from the service of the God of their fathers; and that

all the subsequent events by which their history has been distinguished are in exact accordance with the warnings and predictions, by which they were before admonished to stand upon their watch tower and guard against the evil of sin. Neither is this all; I proceed a step further, and affirm, that the fulfilment of these predictions settles beyond dispute the truth and divine authority of the Bible, and proves that this blessed Book is no cunningly devised fable, but that it is characterised by soberness and truth, and is infinitely worthy to be received in the character which it claims as the exclusive and unadulterated word of God.

Were I to enter into all the minutiae of the history of this once exalted but now degraded and humbled nation, this work would be swollen to a size which would be inconvenient to general readers. My observations therefore must embrace (and that as briefly as possible) merely the two following points of illustration.

1. The siege and capture of Jerusalem, with the destruction and spoliation of the temple.

2. The dispersion of the Jews, with the termination of their state and polity. And I shall view both these events in connection with the prophecies which went before relative to their occurrence.

The first of those events, viz. the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, is variously referred to by several of the writers ~~book~~ of the Old and New Testament. In Deut. xxviii. 15, 50, 52, we thus read, “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that he will bring against thee a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.” And again we thus read, Jer. v. 10, “Go ye up upon her walls and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.” And also Jer. vi. 6, “Thus hath the Lord of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her.” Numerous references and threatenings of a similar character are also to be found scattered throughout the writings of several other of the Old Testament prophets; and though it

seems probable, that the threatenings and predictions recorded by Jeremiah related primarily to the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, still it must be supposed that they had more or less an indirect reference to its final destruction by the Romans, and it is undoubtedly to the latter event that the prophecies in Deuteronomy principally refer. If however any difficulty is experienced in applying these passages, we have still the New Testament before us, in which numerous predictions relative to this event are recorded, sufficiently explicit, and which admit of no doubt as to their proper application. In short, no single event of a temporal character seems to have occupied so much the mind of the Redeemer, as the coming ruin of this devoted city. It was from his lips that the predictions respecting it which are couched in the following language exclusively fell. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple : and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? Verily I say unto you, that there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Matth. xxiv. 1, 2. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in

this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41, 44. "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not: then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains, and let him that is on the house top not go down into the house, neither enter therein to take any thing out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment." Mark xiii. 14—16. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gen-

ties, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 20, 24.

The passages which I have already given from the book of Deuteronomy form but a very small portion of what that book contains relative to the judgments which ultimately came upon this guilty nation. The same may also be said of the above passages selected from the writings of the three Evangelists. Several of the chapters here referred to contain a very full and detailed account of those direful calamities. I have merely given the above as a general specimen of the whole; and though in prosecuting the subject I shall have to bring a part of them forward again, with some additional quotations from the same books, and also from some other parts of the inspired writings, the reader will nevertheless do well, in order to get a full and comprehensive view of the subject, to read with attention and prayer the whole of Deut. xxviii. also the whole of Matth. xxiv. Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. because by so doing he will be enabled to appreciate the weight which ought to be attached to the various circumstances, which, in the dispensations of Providence led to the full and literal accomplishment of every part of these prophecies. But before I proceed to point out the events by which they were ultimately fulfilled, there

are two or three preliminary observations bearing upon the subject, to which I wish briefly to direct the reader's attention.

First. The simple fact of Christ's having actually uttered the words which I have quoted above from the Evangelists, is a strong, or rather I might say, an incontestable proof of the divine authority of his mission. The policy of a deceiver is always to court popularity, and to seek favour with the people, careful to avoid every thing which would lower his reputation with them, sink him in their esteem, or in any degree tend to make him odious amongst them. And of course if Christ had been a person of this character, that is, had there been in him the least tendency to fraud or dissimulation, he would in common with the rest of such characters have undoubtedly adopted the same line of policy. Now in that case, such a prophecy as the one recorded above, especially that part of it which refers to the destruction of the temple, never could, and certainly never would have fallen from his lips. The temple was the very idol of the Jews; they were, as we may see from the event referred to in Acts xxi. 28, exceedingly tenacious of its honour, or of any thing being said or done which might seem to indicate a want of reverence for it, or in any measure tend to lower it in public estimation. To

say, therefore, that it would speedily be reduced to a heap of ruins, and so reduced that not one stone would be left upon another, was an expression calculated to excite all the rage and choler of a Jew. Such an offence as this would be considered unpardonable, and without doubt would sink the speaker at once so low that he would never be able to rise again in public estimation. The reader will perceive the truth and force of this observation, if he refers to Mark xiv. 58, in which passage the Jews bring an accusation against the Redeemer before the great council of the nation, in the following language, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another without hands." There can be no doubt but that the Lord Jesus had in the course of his public teaching used language similar to what is here ascribed to him, but he spoke figuratively of his own body under the similitude of a temple, and of his own anticipated resurrection from the dead, which was to take place on the third day after his crucifixion. Whether the persons who heard him utter these words, thus understood him or not, is uncertain; it is however sufficiently evident, that they brought this circumstance against him as a crime, which they knew would, if established, render him odious in the

eyes of the people, excite the indignation of his judges, and place him in a situation of imminent danger. Hence we are told in the 55th verse of the same chapter, that the express object which they had in view when they advanced this charge, was to establish against him an accusation of a character sufficiently criminal, to enable them under a semblance of justice, and with the forms of law, to put him to death.

Secondly. At the time this prophecy was uttered by the Redeemer, there was not the least probability, according to all human appearance, that it would ever be fulfilled. The Jews were then under Roman protection, and at peace with all the surrounding nations ; and had it been otherwise, their chief city Jerusalem was so strongly fortified both by nature and art, that they might have fully calculated upon their ability successfully to resist the attacks of any ordinary force which might be brought against it. David thus speaks of it in his day : “ Walk about Zion, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces ; that ye may tell it to the generation following. Lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled ; they were troubled, and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain as of a

woman in travail." Psalm xlviii. 4, 5, 6, 12, 13. Jeremiah likewise, after the sacking of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, speaks of it as an extraordinary event, and one which from its well known strength was very unlikely to have taken place. The kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. Lam. iv. 12. And as far as we can judge at this distance of time, there appears to have been still stronger reason for calculating upon its security at the time this prophecy fell from the Saviour's lips, for it had then attained a degree of grandeur and strength heretofore unknown. Besides its natural defence of mountains and hills, it was surrounded by three immense walls, except on one side where it had always been deemed inaccessible; and on that side it had only one. This was remarkably strong, erected on a hanging rock, and fortified by sixty towers. The middle wall had fourteen, and the third no fewer than ninety of these towers. And as to the temple, which was doomed to fall with the city, some idea may be formed of its magnitude, from the fact of its having been forty-six years in building, or rather in enlarging and repairing, to which the passage in John ii. 20, seems principally to refer. An ancient

writer remarks that its riches, grandeur and elegance were such as exceeded the power of language to describe. We may judge of its strength by the immense stones with which it was constructed. Josephus says that these stones were nearly 68 feet long, more than 7 high, and 19 broad. The circuit of the whole building was four furlongs, its height one hundred cubits, and it was ornamented and sustained by 160 pillars, each 27 feet high. Now when this description of the city and temple is duly considered, no one can for a moment suppose, that Christ, if he had been an imposter, would have thus predicted the speedy and total ruin of both. This event was then so unlikely to occur, that no one would have dared, had he not been positively commissioned from God, and sustained by a conscious sense of his authority, to have thus hazarded his character and his reputation, by staking them as it were upon the bare possibility of such a circumstance taking place. To state moreover, as Christ did, that the predicted desolation was to take place not at some future and unknown period, but within the limits of that generation, (Matth. xxiv. 34,) must have been still more surprising to his hearers, and such an assertion as he never could, and certainly never would have made, had he been any thing less

than the anointed of the Lord, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. Yet, improbable as such an event must have appeared, what was the result? Every one who is acquainted with the history of that period, knows that "not one jot nor one tittle" of this remarkable prediction fell to the ground. The whole (astonishing as it may appear) was fulfilled, and fulfilled too within the specified time, before that generation had passed away. The Romans came and took away both their place and nation, (John. xi. 48,) and brought upon them a state of desolation and ruin, to which they might well apply the language of the prophet, "Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste." Isaiah lxiv. 10, 11.

Thirdly. From the terms employed in the foregoing passages, it evidently appears that the Romans were the people to whom reference is made, and by whom the threatened destruction was to be brought about. It is said of the destroying nation in the passage which I have already quoted, Deut. xxviii. 49, that it is swift as an eagle. In which passage there evidently appears to be an indirect reference to them, as

an eagle was their martial ensign. There is also an allusion of a similar character in the words of our Lord, mentioned in Matth. xxiv. 28, "Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together;" the meaning of which is, that where the carcass, or the great body of the Jewish nation, would be collected, there would the eagles, that is, the Roman ensigns and the Roman prowess, be congregated. And it is a remarkable fact, that the great body of the nation was thus collected together, when the direful calamity described in the following pages overtook them. The people from all parts of the country were at that time come up to Jerusalem, and assembled within its walls, in order to celebrate the Passover, when the Roman army suddenly advanced and shut them in. There must therefore have been at this period several thousand people within the walls of the city, besides the usual number of inhabitants; the consequence was, that such an assemblage brought on famine with increasing rapidity, and in a variety of respects greatly added to the horrors of the scene.

On this point, however, I need not enlarge here, as several circumstances will be brought forward in the further prosecution of the subject, in which the reader will perceive how exactly the events which took place tallied with

the predictions which were previously recorded, and evidently shewed that these were the days of vengeance, and that the Romans were the people by whom all things which were written afore time respecting them were to be fulfilled. Luke xxi. 22.

I now pass on from these preliminary observations to enlarge more particularly upon the various circumstances by which these remarkable prophecies were eventually fulfilled. In doing this, it will be requisite for me to refer to several facts connected with the history of the times when these events took place, and as this work may fall into the hands of some persons who possess little or no information upon this subject, I shall advert more minutely than I should otherwise have deemed necessary, to the history of that period, and to the several circumstances connected with the siege and capture of Jerusalem, as it was, in the overruling providence of God, by this event that the whole of the afore stated predictions ultimately received their accomplishment.

The relation which existed between the Jews and the Romans, at the time the Saviour thus foretold their calamities, was very similar to that which now exists between Great Britain and this country. Several years previous to this period, they had been subjected to the Roman

government: and a short time before this prophecy fell from his lips, Judea was made a province of the Roman empire; by which event they were brought into a still nearer connection with that people. To the authority of their foreign rulers, however, they submitted with a considerable degree of reluctance; and, after various inferior tumults, one of a more serious character took place about the year 66, when they made a united effort to shake off the Roman power. In this revolt, a Roman garrison which they overpowered was put to the sword in the fort of Antonia. This circumstance exceedingly exasperated the Romans. In order therefore to chasten them for this offence, and bring them again into subjection, they sent the following year a formidable army into Judea under the command of Cestus Gallus. Nothing however material took place until the year 68, when a still stronger force was sent under the command of Vespasian and Titus, which after several victories obtained over the Jews advanced immediately to the walls of Jerusalem, and in the year 73 entered in due form upon the siege of the city.*

* In Walker's Geography, page 294, the account of this calamitous war is thus given:—"In the year 67 began the war with the Romans, which only terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the subversion of the Jewish nation. At first their suc-

It was on the approach of this army, that the days of vengeance, to which I have before referred, commenced. (Luke xxi. 22.) It was likewise to the approach of the same hostile

cesses were various, and in their mutual contests thousands were slain on both sides ; dreadful dissensions, in the mean time, breaking forth amongst the Jews, the Christians fled to Pella beyond Jordan, and were secure ; and many others, judging what would be the consequence of the Roman displeasure, retired from the city. In the year 68 Vespasian entered Galilee at the head of a powerful army ; one city after another fell victims to the Roman vengeance ; and the people, in prodigious numbers, were either put to the sword, or carried into captivity. Among the latter was Josephus, the Jewish historian, who afterwards, being in favour with the Romans, accompanied Titus, Vespasian's son, at the siege of Jerusalem, and recorded their wars.

" The nation was now divided into two very opposite parties ; one was for submitting to the Romans, and obtaining peace ; the other was composed of zealots, who affirmed it would be offering the greatest dishonour to God, to submit to an earthly potentate, and especially to heathens. Under the name of religion, the zealots committed the most horrid cruelties : they began their outrages by murdering all those that opposed them in the country round about ; they entered Jerusalem, but met with a stout opposition from the opposite party, who had taken up arms to defend themselves from the violence of these fierce persecutors. The zealots got the upper hand, and 12,000 persons of rank in the city, in the flower of their age, fell victims to their wanton cruelty. Barely to put these to death was thought too mild a punishment : they made it their diversion to inflict the most exquisite tortures they could invent on the helpless victims of their implacable fury. They next began to wreak their vengeance on the multitude, who were obliged to flee Jersalem, and to seek refuge with the Romans, though the zealots had placed guards at the avenues, who were sure to destroy the miserable fugitives that fell into their hands. Vespasian waited at Cesarea, know-

force, that Christ alluded in Matth. xxiv. 15—18, as the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, and on the appearance of which he commanded his disciples to flee

ing that the Jews were wasting their strength, and rendering themselves an easier prey to the Roman arms. When the zealots, under John, the son of Levi, who had heretofore fled from the siege of Gischala, had destroyed or driven out all the opposite party, these violent people turned their rage against each other. The Idumeans, who were of John's party, had complained of the number put to death; but John, by his tyranny, forced them to revolt, and turn their arms against him.

"One Simon also, who had his head quarters at Massada, had formed a party, and in his turn had massacred, plundered, burnt, and destroyed almost all before him. Through fear of the greater fury of John and his zealots, whose strong hold was the temple, and who, it was feared, would set fire to the rest of the city, the gates of Jerusalem were opened to Simon and his followers. Another faction ~~was~~ also raised in the city under Eleazar; but this was of no long continuance, for the different parties were all resolved into the two factions of Simon and John.

"In 72, the Romans began their march towards the capital of Judea, wasting the country, and destroying the inhabitants as they went along; and in 73 sat down before the walls of Jerusalem. The General, Titus, afterwards Emperor, repeatedly by Nicænor, by Josephus, and in his own person, made offers of peace to this infatuated people; but they were rejected with contempt, and Titus was with reluctance obliged to begin the siege in form. With incredible labour of the Romans trees were cut down, houses levelled, rocks clest asunder, and valleys filled up, towers were raised, walls built, and battering rams erected, with other engines of destruction, against the city.

"Within, the factions of John and Simon were mutually destroying each other. The parties were unanimous in the desperate malices they made upon the Romans; and, when returned within the gates, with equal rage they turned their arms against each other,

from Judea. The term “abomination” seems to refer to the Roman ensigns, which were considered an abomination by the Jews, on account of having upon them paintings and other sym-

in those parts of the city which John had heretofore laid waste in his fury; while such of them as fell into the hands of the Romans were crucified in view of the town.

“The Romans, after several severe conflicts, and extreme fatigue, made a breach in the walls, and forced a passage. The Jews, abandoning this inclosure, retired to the next: with still greater pains the second was forced; the Jews retreated and were again inclosed. In the mean time famine and pestilence reigned within the city; the rage of the factious increased with their calamities; they forced the houses of the inhabitants in quest of victuals: if they found provisions, they killed the people for not apprising them of it, if none, they inflicted on them the most excruciating tortures, under the idea or pretence of their having some concealed. The zealots were not reduced to real want, but they had the horrid satisfaction of starving what they called useless persons, and thereby keeping up their own stock.

“The General, knowing their miserable condition, and wishing to spare them, gave them four days to cool; and in the mean time distributed provisions to his army in view of the besieged, who flocked on the walls to behold it. He made fresh offers of peace, to which bitter invectives and renewed hostilities were returned. From the offers of Titus, which they attributed to cowardice rather than compassion, and from the cruelties of the zealots, great numbers were induced (though desperate the attempt) to steal away privately to the Romans: while many were only rendered more desperate and resolute; and even in the Roman camp they met with their destruction. From a notion the soldiers had taken, that they had swallowed great quantities of gold, 2000 of them were ripped open in one night to come at the supposed treasure. Titus, apprised of this bloody business, would have condemned the murderers; but they proved so numerous, he was obliged to forego the design, and content him-

bols of various heathen deities: and the army is called the “abomination of desolation,” to intimate that the army which bore those ensigns would make Jerusalem desolate. He like-

self with issuing a proclamation through the camp, that whoever should henceforward be suspected of such horrid villainy, should be put to death; yet this did not prove a sufficient protection, many of them afterwards were secretly murdered through the same greedy design.

“The calamities of the Jews continued to increase.—Without, the Romans throwing up a wall in about three days, near five miles in circuit, thereby cut off from the besieged the possibility of escape by flight, as well as help and provisions from abroad: such was their ardour to hasten the destruction of this destined nation.—Within, heaps of dead bodies rotting above ground, and dying mortals, desolated the streets of Jerusalem; the inhuman zealots making the miseries and dying groans of their starving brethren the subject of their cruel mirth, and even wantonly killing them, by sheathing their swords in their emaciated bodies, under pretence of trying their sharpness. “I should undertake,” says Josephus, “an impossible task were I to enter into a detail of all the cruelties of those impious wretches; it will be sufficient to say, that I do not think that since the creation any city ever suffered such dreadful calamities, or abounded with men so fertile in all kinds of wickedness.” When the zealots saw they could no longer, either by their severities, or the greatest vigilance of their guards, prevent the defection of the people, or their flight to the Romans, they had recourse to another most impious stratagem:—A set of wretches, pretenders to prophecy, was hired to go about the city, crying out that a speedy and miraculous deliverance was at hand: and this for a while afforded delusive hopes to the miserable remains of this infatuated people, when an affair happened in Jerusalem which filled the inhabitants with consternation and despair, and their besiegers with horror and indignation. An unhappy woman, reduced to the last extremity by pinching hunger, sacrificed the

wise gives them a sign of the exact period when they might anticipate the approach of these calamities, viz. when they saw this hostile force advance so far as to take up its position within the precincts of the “holy place.”

feelings of a mother to the voracious calls of appetite, butchered her child, and fed upon the body.

“When news of this unnatural affair was spread through the city, the miserable inhabitants then began to think themselves forsaken by Divine Providence, and to expect the most dreadful effects of his vengeance and judgments; and when Titus heard with horror the dismal account, he, in his anger, resolved on the extirpation of the nation. “Since,” said he, “they have so often refused my proffers of pardon, and have preferred war to peace, rebellion to obedience, and famine (such a dreadful one especially) to plenty,—I am determined to bury that cursed metropolis under its ruins, that the sun may never shoot his beams on a city where the mothers feed on the flesh of their children, and the fathers, no less guilty than they, choose to drive them to such extremities, rather than lay down their arms.”

“Titus, notwithstanding this declaration, was still inclined to compassionate this deluded people; and while one part was yielding after another to the strenuous attacks of the Roman army, both Josephus and he continued to exhort and persuade them to surrender. He desired greatly to preserve the temple; saw with concern the daily sacrifice cease, and upbraided the zealots for neglecting their worship; but this wretched people were plundering that very temple which they superstitiously regarded as their sure defence against the Roman nation, and which they persuaded themselves was too holy to be ever suffered to fall into the hands of the heathen, though they themselves were getting drunk with the wine intended for the sacrifice. The havoc of war now raged in Jerusalem; one place after another was set fire to by the besiegers and the besieged, and in the dreadful combustion, numbers were destroyed on both sides. The temple was yet entire; but the fury of the assailants could

Another feature by which the approach of this eventful period would be distinguished, and by which the Jews would be premonished of its coming, is stated in the following lan-

now no longer be restrained. One of the Roman soldiers, getting on the shoulders of his comrade, threw a blazing fire-brand in at the window of the temple, which soon set the building in a flame, on the same day and month in which it had formerly been burnt by Nebuchadnezzar. Titus, who had been sleeping in his pavilion, awakened by the noise, immediately ran to give orders to have it extinguished, but in vain ; he called, he begged, threatened, and even caned his men ; but they in the general confusion, were too earnestly bent on killing the Jews, or increasing the flames, to either hear or regard the orders of their General. By the flames, by falls from the battlements, and by the Roman sword, which destroyed all it met with, whether man or woman, the hoary head, or the tender child, prodigious numbers perished, and amongst these upwards of 6000 persons, who had been seduced there by false prophets, who had promised them a miraculous deliverance on that very day. Some of them remained five whole days on the battlements, and threw themselves on the General's mercy ; but were answered, that they had outstayed their time, and were led to execution.

" The scene of these desolations was the temple and its precincts, from whence the zealots by a strenuous push made their way into the city ; but the avenues were guarded, and they could not get out. They then fortified themselves as well as they could on the south side of the city, from whence John and Simon desired a parley with the general ; they were answered, that though they had been the cause of so much bloodshed and ruin, their lives should be spared if they would lay down their arms. They replied, they had engaged themselves by the most solemn oaths never to surrender, and begged leave to retire to the mountains with their wives and children. Enraged at this reply, Titus caused a herald to bid them stand on their defence, declaring that not one of them should be spared, since they persisted to refuse his last offers of pardon.

guage : “ Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences ; and fearful sights and great

“ The daughter of Zion, or the lower city, was now abandoned to the fury of the soldiers, who plundered, burnt, and massacred with insatiable rage. The zealots who were left fled to the royal palace in the upper city, called also the city of David, on mount Zion, and here they killed 8000 Jews who had taken refuge in it.

“ Near twenty days were spent by the Romans in making preparations for a vigorous attack on the upper city ; the engines of war then played with fury ; the besieged, who were seized with a panic, ran like madmen, with design to attack the wall of circumvallation in order to effect an escape from the city ; but being repulsed they fled to the public sinks, common sewers, and every secret recess they could find ; those whom the Romans could find were massacred, and the city was set on fire. John being pinched with hunger came out and begged his life ; this was spared, but he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Simon’s retreat being better stored he held longer out. Simon and John were saved with 700 of the handsomest Jewish captives, to attend the triumphal chariot : after which Simon was dragged through the streets, with a rope about his neck, severely scourged, and then put to death, and John was sent to his punishment. Three castles still remained untaken, Herodian, Machaeron, and Massada ; the two former capitulated, but Massada held out. The place was very strong both by nature and art, and defended by a number of zealots under Eleazar. The Roman General having in vain tried his engines and battering rams against it, surrounded it with a high wall, and set fire to the gates. Eleazar, in despair, persuaded the garrison first to kill their wives and children, and then to choose ten men by lot, who should kill all the rest ; and lastly, one of the surviving ten men to dispatch them and himself, first setting fire to the place before he put an end to his own life. This was accordingly done ; and when on the mor-

signs shall there be from heaven. And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke xxi. 10, 11, and 25, 26. Josephus the Jewish historian, referring to this period says, that a meteor resembling a flaming sword hung over Jerusalem one whole year. The great gate of the temple, which twenty men could scarcely shut, and which was made

now, the Romans were preparing to scale the walls, surprised neither to see nor hear any thing stirring, they raised a hideous outcry ; on which two women, who had concealed themselves in an aqueduct, came out and acquainted them with the desperate catastrophe of the besieged.

—The whole number of Jews who perished in this war was computed to be upwards of 1,406,000, besides vast numbers who perished in caves, woods, wildernesses, common sewers, &c. of whom no account could be taken. Of the number of prisoners, amounting to 97,000 (besides 11,000 who were starved through neglect, or died probably of extreme grief) a few were reserved to grace the victor's triumph, and great numbers sent to the different cities of Syria, to be exposed on the public theatres as gladiators, or to be devoured by wild beasts, according to the barbarous usages of the times.

" Since this dreadful catastrophe of their city and government, the Jews have been dispersed over the face of the earth: and notwithstanding the continued persecutions of the uncircumcised through all the ages of Christianity, they continue to increase and multiply. They have eminently distinguished themselves by their commercial industry, many important branches of merchandise being derived from them."

fast with bolts and bars, was seen to open of its own accord on the eighth of the month Zanthius. At the ninth hour of the night, there shone round about the altar, and the circumjacent buildings of the temple, a light equal to the brightness of the day for the space of half an hour. Soon after the feast of the Passover, in various parts of the country, before the setting of the sun, chariots and armed men were seen in the air passing round about Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost, when the priests went at midnight into the temple to attend their service, they first heard a kind of noise as of a movement from the place, and this was followed by a loud voice, saying, "Let us depart hence." These statements will probably appear extraordinary, and by some of my readers will scarcely be credited. I beg however to observe, that the actual occurrence of what is here stated does not rest upon the testimony of Josephus alone; these events are referred to by Tacitus the Roman historian, who thus epitomises them, "Armies seemed to meet in the air; arms were glittering. The temple shone with the sudden fire of heaven, and a divine voice was heard that the Deity was departing." Now, in order that the reader may attach to the united testimony of these two historians, the weight and impor-

tance which it certainly demands as a proof of the fulfilment of the Saviour's words, I beg to remind him, that the former continued a Jew and never embraced the gospel, and that the latter was a learned Gentile, who not only never embraced but hated and villified it. These things were not therefore written in either case, with a view of confirming the testimony of the Christian Scriptures, but are a simple statement of their own impressions, and a faithful record of the facts as they actually occurred.

One of the first events which characterised the operations of the Roman army, on its arrival in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem was the fulfilment of that part of the prediction recorded in Luke xix. 43. "The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side." We are told that the Romans with almost incredible labour cut down an immense quantity of timber with which to blockade the city, and having begirt it with their troops they then surrounded it with a strong wall that none of the Jews might escape out of their hands; which event the Saviour's omniscient mind no doubt fore-saw, and to which he evidently referred when he uttered the above words. Another feature

of this extraordinary period is thus described in Matth. xxiv. 21. “ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Josephus has given a heart affecting view of the trials which the Jews underwent in this memorable siege; and a slight reference to what he has written on the subject, will at once convince the reader, with what propriety this period might be thus described as a period of great tribulation. “ Our city,” he says, “ was thrust down to the extremest misery; for if the misfortunes of all people, from the beginning of the world, were compared with those of the Jews, they would appear much inferior on the comparison.” And again he says in another place, “ To speak in brief, no nation, and no city, ever suffered such things as we have done; and truly no generation from the beginning of the world was ever so fruitful in wickedness.” The tribulations thus referred to by this celebrated Historian, appear to have consisted not only in the foe without, but also in famine within; to which were added continual broils, deadly animosities, and such scenes of treachery and bloodshed as have never either before or since been recorded in the pages of history.

The final overthrow of this wretched people, with their state and polity, is described as fol-

lows, in Luke xxi. 24. "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And again in Chap. xix. 44, we also read, "And shall lay thee (that is the city) even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

The city having been some time invested as before described by the Roman troops, was at length taken by assault. On this occasion nearly 100,000 Jews were made prisoners, who were afterwards "led captive into all nations," and were either sold for "bond slaves," or doomed according to the barbarity of the times to suffer a severer fate; a few were reserved to grace the victor's triumph; and the rest, without exception to either age or sex, were all put to death. It is supposed, on a moderate computation, that if the sum total of all who perished during the whole war, either by the Roman sword, by famine, or by disease, could be ascertained, it would be found to amount to upwards of two millions of people. It is not therefore requisite for me to offer any ~~remarks~~ on these facts, as the reader will no doubt at once perceive in what a strik-

ing manner they illustrate the former part of the foregoing prediction. Relative to the fulfilment of the latter part, viz. the total destruction of the city, I have only to add, that it is a well ascertained fact, that it was so completely destroyed by the conquerors that it may in truth be said one stone was not left upon another. The Romans, we are told, burnt the extreme parts of it, and totally demolished the walls. Newton, who takes Josephus as his authority, says that the ruin was so complete that travellers who visited it within a short time after its capture, could scarcely believe that it had been inhabited : and as to the fulfilment of the prediction, that it should be trodden down of the Gentiles, of this we have ocular proof which continues to exist even to the present day. Although nearly 1800 years have rolled over since it thus fell a victim to the rage of its enemies, the scene in this respect has not during this long period been in any measure reversed. It was not only to be trodden down of the Gentiles, but to be trodden down until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. That period has not yet arrived ; and therefore in this state of humiliation and degradation it is still suffered to remain. Ever since its first conquest by the Romans down to the present day, it has been in continued

subjection to one class of Gentiles or another; nor has a single Jew since that period been able either to take up his abode in it, or even to visit it, but by Gentile sufferance. From the Romans it passed into the hands of the Arabic Saracens, from them to the Franks, afterwards to the Mamelukes, and lastly into the hands of the Turks, who still hold it in possession.

The truth of the facts which I have brought forward, respecting the fall of this great city, are confirmed by the well known circumstance that there are in Rome the remains of a triumphal arch, which continues to the present day, and which was erected by Titus in commemoration of his victory. On this arch is to be seen a representation of the golden candlestick and other utensils used in the temple of Jerusalem; and in addition to this fact, a few of the medals which were struck by the Romans in commemoration of this event are still preserved. The author has some recollection of having seen one during his late visit to England. On one side of these medals is "Judea Capta," (Judea taken) with a female weeping under a palm tree; and on the other the head of the Emperor, and "Senatus consultu," (by decree of the Senate.)

Who, therefore, after seeing so many of

these predictions thus remarkably fulfilled, and the proof of their fulfilment evinced by such a variety of existing facts, can possibly, without doing violence to his judgment and convictions, refuse his assent to the inference which we draw from them, viz. that the Bible is the word of God, and that the Christian religion is a religion of divine authority. Lord Erskine, formerly Lord Chancellor of England, a man who from his profession was in the habit of weighing and sifting evidence, has well declared, that if there were no other evidence in support of its heavenly origin, the evidence arising from the fulfilment of these prophecies alone is not only amply sufficient but absolutely irresistible. In short, the evidence we derive from this source goes as far as any evidence (let the subject to which it relates be whatever it may) of a testimonial nature possibly can go; and he who objects to this on the ground of its insufficiency, and for the same reason rejects the Bible as the inspired record of heaven, certainly ought, in order to be consistent with himself, to reject all testimonial evidence, and refuse his assent to all that he has ever heard on the subject of philosophy, science, or history, and retiring within the enclosure of a universal scepticism, ~~make~~ his own senses, and his own observation, his own eyes

and his own ears, the alone accredited standard of truth on every subject and every event.

There is another part of this prophecy which demands particular attention. It is that which relates more particularly to the destruction of the temple. Of this splendid edifice it is expressly said by the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that there should not be left one stone upon another which should not be thrown down. We have also a prophecy in Daniel on the same subject, Chap. ix. 26, which was written 600 years before that of the Evangelists, in which it is expressly stated, that the people of the prince who should come would destroy the sanctuary. Now, on the nature of this prophecy we may observe, that if we duly consider the immense size of the stones of which the temple was erected (68 feet long, 7 high, and 9 broad,) we cannot but suppose that this prediction must have appeared exceedingly unreasonable to the persons who lived in the age in which it was uttered. They would scarcely give credit to the assertion that such a building would be destroyed, and destroyed so entirely that not one stone would be left upon another. But whatever might be their sentiments on the subject, we who live in the present day know, that such actually was the fact of the case; and when

ders this circumstance the more remarkable is, that the Roman general, Titus, particularly wished to preserve it, and gave orders to his soldiers to that effect. He also protested to the Jews who had fortified themselves within it, that he would preserve it even against their will. But his wish in this respect was not in accordance with the purposes of God; and therefore he was prevented from carrying his design into execution. In the general confusion that occurred when the assault was made on the city, one of the Roman soldiers threw a flaming firebrand in at one of the windows of the temple, which set it on fire. Titus immediately ran to the spot, and ordered the fire to be extinguished, but neither exhortations nor threats could restrain the violence of the soldiers; they either could not or would not hear, and the work of destruction went on notwithstanding his orders to the contrary. Though foiled in this respect, he still determined, if possible, to preserve the holy place, and commanded his soldiers to be beaten for disobeying his orders; but their anger, their hatred of the Jews, and a certain warlike fury overcame their reverence for their commander, and their dread of his displeasure. In the general confusion that ensued, the whole building was demolished, and brought to utter ruin, in opposition to his

wishes, and in spite of his endeavours to save it. Shortly after the city had been captured by the Romans, a report was circulated amongst the soldiers, that a considerable quantity of gold was buried beneath the foundation of the temple. In order therefore to come at this supposed treasure, the Roman general, who was left in command of the army which continued in the neighbourhood, tore up the very foundations of the sacred edifice with a plough share. Thus the words of the Redeemer, however extraordinary they might have appeared at the time they fell from his lips, were literally fulfilled; for by this process its ruin was so completely effected, that one stone was not left upon another. And this fact is still more remarkable, and worthy of increased attention, when it is remembered that God had thus doomed Jerusalem to destruction, and caused the following sentence to be recorded against it, more than 600 years before the Saviour's incarnation: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and the mountain of the house of the Lord shall become as the high place of a forest." Jer. xxvi. 18, and Micah iii. 12.

I beg therefore the reader seriously to reflect upon the accumulated evidence which is derived from the exact fulfilment of these pro-

phecies, in favour of the truth of the Bible. The antecedent revelation of these events could not have been the result of human wisdom, human foresight, or human sagacity: it must have been absolutely and solely the doing of Him to whom are known all his works from the beginning. Prophecies similar to what I have now advanced can belong only to prescience, and prescience is the sole prerogative of the omniscient and eternal God. He alone who formed all creatures can have a perfect knowledge of their capabilities, and their movements. He who first established and still sustains the course of nature, alone can have a perfect knowledge of its tendencies and its results; and He alone who controls all events is secure from the possibility of having any of his designs frustrated, or his purposes counteracted. To Him the future is as distinctly known as the past, and the book of his decrees as distinctly written as the book of his remembrance. If therefore we can bring forward a single distinct prediction, which ages before ~~was~~ clearly revealed, and then shew that this prediction was literally fulfilled, it must in reason be acknowledged, that we then establish a case in which it is evident a divine prescience was actually concerned, and may fairly claim for the record in which that prediction is contained, the character of a divine

inspiration. If we can establish a second case of this nature, the evidence becomes still stronger; and so on in every successive case that is well authenticated, as far as we can multiply them. We present in every individual instance of this nature, a valid and continually accumulating argument, in proof of the authority and inspiration of the document containing these predictions; and the accumulated weight and force of the evidence, derived from this source, ought not to be judged of from any particular or insulated prediction that has been accomplished, however striking or peculiar it may be; but it must be estimated by the sum total,—by the combination of the whole of the instances in which it can be clearly proved, that certain accredited predictions of this nature, which were anciently recorded, have in subsequent ages been literally fulfilled. Let then this test of truth be applied to the Bible; let it be applied in all its accumulated forms, and in all its various ramifications: let it be applied not merely to ~~a~~ few single instances, but to the sum total of the prophecies which that book contains, and which have been credibly proved to be fulfilled, and we shall see rising up before us a mass of moral and circumstantial evidence amply sufficient to convince us of its truth,—evidence of such

a character as will for ever seal our mouths in silence under a conscious sense of guilt if we continue to hold fast our infidelity, and refuse to receive that blessed book as the only guide by which we can be infallibly directed in our way to an immortality of blessedness and glory.

I now proceed to notice, in the second place, the dispersion of the Jews, and the breaking up of their national and ecclesiastical polity, with the prophecies which were aforetime recorded relative to that event.

On this subject the reader will find several predictions in the chapters already quoted, viz. Matth. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi.; and a still larger number, with a more minute and detailed account of their dispersion, and the various calamities in which they were ultimately involved, in Deut. xxviii. which was written by Moses 1450 years before their dispersion took place, and 3250 years from the present period; in addition to which there are likewise numerous references of a similar character scattered more or less through almost every part of the Old Testament Scriptures. I have in the following pages, presented to the view of the reader, a few passages selected from the inspired writings which relate to this subject, but he will nevertheless do well carefully to

examine for himself the whole of the chapters referred to above, and to mark those verses in particular which have a more immediate bearing upon it.

The first passage which I here wish to bring forward will be found in Deut. xxviii. 64—67, “The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. And there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” In verse 25, it is also said, “The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.” And again it is said, relative to this dispensation in Luke xxi. 24, “They shall be led away captive into all nations.”

The fulfilment of this part of the prophecy will be seen in the facts which have already been brought forward, viz. that at the time the city was captured, 100,000 prisoners fell

into the hands of the Romans, who were either sold for slaves to the surrounding nations, or met with a severer doom. In addition to what they suffered in this way, many thousands more were dispersed by flight. Having by stealth escaped the Roman sword, they went and took up their abode in other countries, where their descendants are to be found in vast multitudes, even unto the present day. In short, so literally has this part of the prophecy been fulfilled, that we still see them a scattered people in every part of the world. Go wherever we will, we find them in every country under the broad concave of heaven, and yet in none do they find a home, in none are they naturalized, in none have they rest for the soles of their feet. On the contrary, they are generally, perhaps I might say almost universally, looked upon as outcasts, and every where treated with contumely and scorn.

In verse 59, the long continuance of their troubles is stated as follows : “ The Lord will make thy ~~plagues~~ wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of *long continuance*, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance ;” and surely no one will be ready to say that 1750 years, the period to which their captivity and their plagues have already been extended, is not a period of long continuance.

How much longer they will lie under the divine displeasure, it is impossible to say. It is however stated by the Redeemer in general terms, that it will be “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ;” after which we have every reason to believe, that their captivity will be turned, and that they will be again restored to the quiet and peaceful possession of their own land. In verse 37, the degradation to which they would be subject in their captivity, is thus described: “Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all the nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.” And every one, who is at all acquainted with the history of this unfortunate people, knows that for ages and generations past, they have been in the state described in this verse, and that to the present day they continue to be more or less an astonishment and a byword in every country where they have taken up their abode. In fact, they are in general so degraded and devoid of principle, that no one in conducting any commercial transaction with them, can depend upon their integrity, or place the least degree of confidence in them. The term “Jew” is proverbially used in England, and also on the continent of Europe, for a dishonest man. To say of any man, (and it is a very common expression), “he is a Jew,”

is as much as to say that "he is a dishonest man, one who will cheat you if he possibly can." How literally therefore has the prediction, that they should become a proverb and a byword, been fulfilled; and how remarkable is this circumstance, when it is recollected that this propheey was written more than 3000 years ago!

The preservation of the Jews as a separate people, and their distinction from all other nations during this period of their history, is frequently referred to in various parts of the word of God. Thus, in Lev. xxvi. 44, after a description of the punishment with which they would be visited on account of their sin, the mercy with which that punishment would be intermingled is thus described; " And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God." Again in Jer. xxx. 11, and xlvi. 28, there is a promise of a similar character: " I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." These prophecies evidently refer to their

continued preservation as a nation ; and in Numb. xxiii. 9, as well as in several other parts of the word of God, their separation as a body distinct from all other communities, is expressly pointed out, " Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." On these passages which were written more than 3000 years ago, I beg to remark, that they do not refer to any one exclusive period in the history of these people, but to every period of their subsequent existence as a nation in the world. Now, that they should have remained a distinct people, during the period of their residence in Judea, is not very astonishing ; but that this distinction should have been preserved, and perpetuated during their exile from their own country, and especially when that exile has been so long protracted, has been, and ever must be, the astonishment of all thinking men. Never since the creation of the world, has there been an instance of a race of men subject to equal oppression, exaction, and derision, and yet surviving and maintaining the broad features of their national character, refusing to amalgamate with any other people, and yet dwelling in the midst of all, and continually holding intercourse and negotiating an advantageous traffic with them. To use the words of an

able writer, “They are present in all countries, with a home in none, intermixed and yet separate, and neither amalgamated nor lost ; but like those mountain streams which are said to pass through lakes of another kind of water, and keep a native quality to repel commixture, they hold communion without union, and may be traced as rivers without banks in the midst of the alien element which surrounds them.” In short, it may be said of them in the present day, as it was more than 2000 years ago by Haman to Ahasuerus, king of Persia, that “their laws are diverse from all people ;” and it is undoubtedly to this peculiarity, under the superintending providence of God, that their preservation as a distinct people is to be attributed. Had not the hand of providence been thus stretched over them, we have every reason to believe, that ages ago they would have dispensed with their peculiar laws and peculiar habits ; because by doing this, they would at once have been delivered from their cruel persecutions, and been permitted to share the worldly advantages of the nations amongst whom they are scattered. May I not therefore, on the review of this part of the prophecy, in particular, appeal to the reader’s unbiassed judgment, and ask him to say whether it does not carry upon the very surface of it all

the air and semblance of truth. How remarkable are the words, "I will not make a full end of them;" and especially when we consider that when these words were uttered, the Jews were a small insulated people, surrounded by great and powerful nations, and yet of all these nations it is expressly said, that "a full end should be made;" and astonishing as the fact may appear, these predictions have been fulfilled even to the very letter in both these opposite cases. The probability according to all human appearance, at the time these prophecies were recorded, was that Israel would be destroyed, and the existence of her more powerful neighbours perpetuated; and had the prophets of the Bible been impostors, they would undoubtedly have founded their predictions upon this existing air of probability. Their prophecies would never have been characterised by the peculiarity that now marks them, especially in the instance now before us. They never would, had they been simply guided by their own reason and ~~their~~ own judgment, have singled out one nation from amongst the rest, and that one of the weakest of them all, and in their predictions assigned to it the honour of a perpetual and distinct existence, whilst they consigned all the rest to infamy and ruin. This single circumstance, and the re-

markable manner in which every jot and every tittle of the prediction relative to it, has been fulfilled, must, as it appears to me, convince every candid mind, that the Bible has without doubt come from Him of whom it is said, that “his word is true from the beginning.” And I beg here to remind the reader, that the authority and inspiration of the Bible, although it contains so much that is calculated to humble the Jews, is nevertheless acknowledged by them, as well as by all Christian nations ; and in the historical and prophetic records of this book, their state, character, and circumstances, from the very first hour of their dispersion down to the present period, are so fully and clearly defined, that I am utterly at a loss to understand how any person with this fact before him can attempt to shake off its authority, or to conceive by what species of ingenuity he can resist the argument which we derive from this source in support of its claims to divine inspiration. In short, the present state of this degraded, yet interesting race of men, and their preservation as a distinct people, are nothing more nor less than a standing miracle of providence—a miracle which is satisfactory, convincing, and undeniable, a proof amounting to demonstration, a species of evidence which is open to all who are interested in the en-

quiry, and from which it is clear beyond all reasonable possibility of a doubt, that the Bible is the word of God. For who, I ask, but God can declare the end from the beginning, and shew the former things before they come to pass? Isaiah xlviii. 3—5. It is his exalted prerogative alone to be thus intimately acquainted with the future, and he alone can assert in the language of high and unimpeachable authority, "I will work, and who shall let it," Isaiah xliii. 13, "saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah xlvi. 10.

Of the Prophecies which are progressively fulfilling in the present day.

I am now arrived at the second class of prophecies, which at the commencement of this Section I proposed to consider, and as the former part of our enquiry has been extended considerably beyond my original intention, I shall in future endeavour to be as brief as may be compatible with the elucidation of the subject before me. The prophecies which come under the class here specified are twofold, viz. those which relate to the destruction of idolatry, and to the universal spread of the gospel of Christ; though there are several others besides, both in the Old and New Testament, which evidently refer to other events, and which with-

out doubt are progressively fulfilling in the present day. But as they are confessedly inferior importance, I omit them altogether, and confine my attention exclusively to the consideration of the two classes specified above, being as they undoubtedly are the most interesting to the serious enquirer after divine truth. On each of these subjects, the Scriptures abound with predictions of a diversified character. It is however only a small selection from each class, that my limits will allow me to bring forward, and I therefore recommend the reader on this as well as on every other point of importance, to examine the Bible for himself. In the present instance, it is of peculiar importance that he should do this, since he will thereby be led to perceive, how extensive the prophecies are upon these subjects, and then comparing them as he ought to do with the passing circumstances of modern times, and the extraordinary manner in which they are fulfilling as it were before our eyes, he will be better able to judge of the extent to which the argument for the truth of Scripture is elucidated by them, as well as to appreciate the increasing strength which it derives from these passing events. In reference to the subject first named, viz. the destruction of idolatry, the following among many other predictions written upwards of

2000 years ago, will be found in the Old Testament Scriptures. "The gods which have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Jer. x. 11. "Every man is brutish by his knowledge, every founder is confounded by the graven image; for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity; the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish." Jer. li. 17, 18. "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isaiah ii. 20, 21. "The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." Zeph. ii. 11.

At the time these inspired declarations fell from the lips of the prophets, all the nations of the earth except the Jews were idolaters, and devoted to the worship of the false gods, whose destruction is here predicted. Immediately after the introduction of the gospel dispensation, these predictions gradually began

to receive their accomplishment. Within a very short space of time after that event, idolatry sustained a deadly blow in various parts of the western world, and ultimately by the power of the same divine truth became totally subverted. The nations of Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, and Poland, were at that time all idolaters; but in all these countries the idols have long since perished. The inhabitants of those countries have ages ago discarded the idols which their ancestors worshipped, "have cast them to the moles and to the bats." They have expunged idolatry from their cities and towns, have renounced the service of these fictitious deities for the service of the living and true God,—the God who made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his discretion. ~~Jer. x. 12.~~ We are not, however, in endeavouring to shew that these inspired declarations have to a considerable extent already received their accomplishment, obliged to confine our attention to what has occurred in ages that are past. There are in the world a number of living witnesses, who could come forward and say with reference to events of this nature which have occurred in modern times, "That which we have heard, which we have

seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and which our hands have handled, declare we unto you." This observation applies particularly to the islands in the South Pacific Ocean, and to the missionaries who have been labouring in that part of the world. Fifty years ago the natives of these islands were all idolaters; now scarcely a vestige of idolatry is to be seen amongst the majority of them.

Long before the Redeemer's advent, a prophecy had gone forth in the following remarkable words, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish," Isa. lx. 12; and the truth of this declaration has been strikingly exemplified in the history of the world subsequent to that event. The nations which have rejected Christianity remain to this day in a state of comparative ignorance and barbarism; whilst on the other hand those which have submitted to its authority have gradually emerged from darkness, obscurity and wretchedness, to knowledge, light and liberty; and we shall perceive, if we consider the present state of the world, that they are the only nations now pre-eminent for civilization and refinement. A striking instance of its power and its beneficial tendency is presented to our view in the history of the insulated islanders just now referred to. The refining, elevating influ-

ence of the gospel, and its effects upon their moral character have astonished all who knew them in the days of their ignorance and idolatry. It may truly be said of them, that "they have been turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Acts. xxvi.

18. But great as has been the change which by divine grace has been effected amongst these interesting people, it has been perhaps still greater, or at least its progress has been more rapid in the Sandwich Islands. In the short space of ten years, that is, since the year 1823, the natives of those thickly populated countries have merged from a state of degrading barbarism and idolatry, to one of civilization, Christian order, and Christian privilege. It is a remarkable and well attested fact, that in the whole of Polynesia, there are upwards of thirty islands where the renunciation of idolatry has been so complete and entire, that no remains whatever of it are to be found in the present day. The idols are totally destroyed, the worship of the one living and true God is set up, Christianity is every where publicly professed, and its sanctions are the basis of all the civil, domestic and religious institutions now existing among the inhabitants. It is also a source of encouragement to know, that this delightful transformation has not yet reached its maxi-

mum, but is still rapidly and steadily advancing in the remainder of the islands, as well as in several other parts of the world. In fact, idolatry seems to be universally on the wane; and it must be evident to every intelligent observer, who is at all acquainted with the present state of the world, and the general tone of public feeling, that the time is not far distant when it must and will be compelled universally to surrender its usurped authority, and when, with its abominations and delusions, it will vanish from the face of the earth like a tale that is told.

The last half century has been prolific in events bearing upon the accomplishment of this great object of our wishes, and our hopes. In the various Bible, Missionary, Tract, School and other public Institutions of a similar character, it has called into existence, and put into operation a vast moral apparatus, which is steadily undermining the long established Babel of popular superstition, and which no doubt will ultimately succeed in bringing it down a headless trunk, like Dagon before the ark of the God of Israel. 1 Sam. v. 4.

It must however be acknowledged, that we have not within this period witnessed any extensive change of a very striking character except in the islands referred to above. I am

therefore disposed to think, that the majority of those persons who are friendly to the spread of divine truth, do not for this reason take quite so encouraging a view of what has been actually accomplished as they ought, and, as it appears to me, the existing state of things warrant them to do. It is true, what has been done is principally of a general character; but it is all tending, and that most decidedly, to one grand point, viz. the subversion of falsehood, and the establishment of righteousness and truth throughout the whole earth. About forty years elapsed, from the offering of the great expiatory sacrifice on mount Calvary, to the destruction of Jerusalem. In that interval the triumph of the gospel, the rapidity of its conquests, and the extensive overthrow of idolatry which it effected, were most astonishing. About the same period has now elapsed since the first formation of the noble institutions referred to above, and I shall perhaps scarcely be credited when I assert, that it is my firm conviction that what has been accomplished in the last mentioned period is by far the greatest. It is not, I admit, equally brilliant in all its immediate results, especially in direct instances of conversion; but this we shall perceive is more than counterbalanced, when we recollect that it is more diffusive in its

character, more diversified in its nature, and that it indicates more extended and permanent effects. Let the enquiring reader only look around and see what is going forward in this country, and compare its present state with what it was forty years ago, and I think he will be ready to acknowledge that an abundance of facts may be derived, even from this source, amply sufficient to bear me out in the statement which I have now advanced. Individual instances of conversion to Christianity, it is true, have not been very numerous ; and yet if the whole were collected, they would perhaps be found to exceed what the generality of readers suppose. But if instances of conversion are not numerous, the instances in which idolatry has been rejected by the natives of this country are numerous and glaring. A wide spreading scepticism as to the truth of the long established religion, has become extensively diffused through the vast population, and is day by day increasingly evincing its power and extending its influence. Multitudes of Hindoos are to be found in the present day, who have openly renounced the religious creed of their forefathers; and there are a still greater number, who, though they outwardly conform to its ceremonies in order to avoid persecution, most thoroughly despise it in their hearts. In fact

the liberal system of education which is now generally patronized in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, must ultimately prove fatal to the idolatry of the country. The afore-stated spirit of scepticism, like an under current, may continue to flow silently and unheeded a few years longer, but its strength is gradually increasing, and its course continually widening; and impelled by the power of the gospel we know what the final result will be. Supported and accelerated by the word of eternal truth, it will ere long rise to the surface, and then combining all its energies, and no longer restrained by the long established embankments of popular superstition, it will sweep as with an overwhelming and irresistible torrent the heterogeneous mass of gods and goddesses, with their deluded votaries in their train, into the ocean of eternal oblivion.

I beg moreover to remind the reader, that these remarks are applicable to other countries besides Bengal. Jehovah is fulfilling his own truth, and “famishing the idols,” in almost every part of the earth. An aggressive system, similar to what is going forward in this land, is in successful and active operation, in China, Burmah, Southern India, Africa, and almost every other idolatrous country in the world. How long the struggle

will be protracted it is impossible to say, but the final result of these operations admits of no doubt whatever. Facts and prophecies uniting their testimony assure us, that the idols cannot continue to maintain their long boasted ascendancy in any of these lands. "He who sits in the heavens will laugh at them: the Lord will have them in derision." "He will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm ii. 4, 9. The decree is gone forth, that the idols shall be utterly abolished, Isaiah ii. 18; and "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. Most assuredly he will; "heaven and earth shall pass away, but his words shall not pass away." Matth. xxiv. 35. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall his word be that goeth forth out of his mouth, it shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing wherunto he has sent it." Isaiah lv. 10, 11.

The second subject to which the prophecies

connected with the class now under consideration refer, is the universal spread of the gospel, though these are in point of fact but the counterpart of those which relate to the destruction of idolatry. These events are so intimately connected with each other, and the one seems to be so naturally the result of the other, that it is difficult in endeavouring to illustrate the two to keep them distinct, to write upon one without more or less referring to the other. The reader will perceive this from the manner in which I have treated this subject in the foregoing pages, where I proposed to confine my remarks exclusively to the destruction of idolatry, but have been at the same time incidentally, and I may say unavoidably, led to touch upon the spread of the gospel also.

The inspired writers might have confined their statements to the destruction of idolatry, without giving us any information as to what was to occupy the vacated throne of this demon of superstition. But they have not done this ; they have furnished us with the most positive information on this as well as on the former subject ; and the fact of their having done so I have ever looked upon as an additional and weighty argument in favour of the divinity of their writings. We are not only expressly informed, that the systems of religious worship which have so

long prevailed will positively and certainly “vanish away ;” but with an equal degree of certainty and an equal clearness we are told what will be established upon their ruins. The two subjects, it is true, are perfectly distinct in the writings of the prophets; but in illustrating them, and enlarging upon them, it is difficult to preserve the distinction; and as in the foregoing remarks on the destruction of idolatry I have brought forward several ideas which properly belong to the present subject, the reader will not be surprized if I should in like manner here introduce a few thoughts and illustrations which strictly speaking belong to the subject of the preceding pages. Amongst many other predictions bearing upon this subject, in almost every part of the word of God, the following seem to demand particular attention. “From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.” Mal. i. 11.

“It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou

inayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Isaiah xlix. 6. "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." Psalm xxii. 27. "He (that is Christ,) shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. Yea all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. He shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed." Psalm lxxii. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations." Matth. xxiv. 14.

The universal triumph of the gospel, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, the reader will perceive are in these passages most explicitly stated; and it was no doubt on the ground of the prediction contained in the last mentioned passage, and knowing that its fulfilment was in accordance with the design of Providence, that the Redeemer before he ascended to glory gave the commission to his disci-

ples, which is recorded in Mark xvi. 15, “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ;” and by which, as far as human instrumentality is concerned, he has made a suitable provision and paved the way for carrying into execution Jehovah’s counsels of mercy to our guilty race. One of the most striking and forcible passages, relating to this interesting subject, in the Old Testament, is to be found in the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. xi. 9, “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” The prominent idea of this passage, appears to be in the striking comparison which the prophet institutes. The knowledge of the Lord is not merely to cover the earth in general, but it is *so* to cover it *as* the waters cover the sea ; and if we are to take this expression literally, (and I see no reason why we should not,) and press the full force of it into our argument, what an elevated view does it then give us of the Redeemer’s triumphs, and how strikingly does it pourtray both the universality and the stability of his kingdom ! Who, it may be asked, can stand for a moment upon the sea shore, and observe the mighty surges rolling with resistless sway unimpeded in their course, and deluging all that oppose them—can watch the rising tide overflowing the whole shore, and filling every

crevice that comes within its boundary, and not be struck with the strength and with the grandeur of this figure? And the passage clearly teaches us to believe that a deluge of religious knowledge similar to this—a deluge of religious knowledge which will issue in the conversion of the world, is ultimately to overspread the whole earth, and to extend to every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue.

We are likewise commanded by Him, whose authority is supreme in the church, to pray that the will of God may be done upon earth as it is done in heaven; and it is in the comparison which is instituted in this passage as well as in the former, that the strength and sublimity of the idea which it unfolds principally consists. The exhilarating thought, that the will of God will ere long be done upon earth, as it is done in heaven, (admitting that the expression is only to be taken comparatively,) is more than the Christian's mind even in its most sanguine moments can now possibly realize. It can, however, scarcely be supposed, that we are commanded, in any part of the inspired page, to pray for that which God never designed in some measure to bestow. On this principle, therefore, and by the authority of this command, we are warranted to believe, that a period is coming in the future history of

our world, when the inhabitants of the earth will vie with the inhabitants of heaven in doing the will of God—when the church militant and the church triumphant will join in one common chorus—will blend their mutual sounds in the most delightful harmony of praise—in a harmony which will be free from one single discordant note, sweet as the music of the spheres, and which, continually increasing in its Alleluiahs, will rise with majestic grandeur before the throne of the Eternal, until his eye and his heart, moved by the melody of its strains, will once more be fixed in complacency and love upon the new born creation, and the fulness of his approbation and delight again be testified in the hallowed announcement that all is “very good.”

It is a well known fact, that the Greek and Roman empires formerly extended over a very considerable portion of the globe ; and yet the Prophet Daniel glancing his eye through the vista of distant ages, and making them the subject of his prophetic theme, very significantly calls them nothing more than a great image, and proceeds to shew that they were but limited in extent, compared with that kingdom which the God of Heaven designed to set up.

The dominion of the papacy once included nearly all Europe, and extended its influence

to several other quarters of the earth ; and yet the same prophet when speaking of this, and bringing it into comparison with the kingdom of the Messiah, denominates it but “a little horn.”

I might bring forward predictions and allusions such as these, and add observations to them of a similar character almost without end ; but this I apprehend is by no means necessary. The reader will take what is here given, as a specimen of the rest. I only beg him to remark, that there is no ambiguity about these prophetic statements ; they are pointed and direct ; there is about them a tone of positiveness, and an air of authority, which would have been utterly irrelevant and improper had they been the mere fabrication of men. I will therefore omit any further direct observations on the Old Testament prophecies. The quotation which I have given from the gospel of St. Matthew, is one of the last recorded predictions on this interesting subject, and as it fell from the lips of the living and true witness, and is more explicit than the others, we will, in the future prosecution of the enquiry, take this as embodying the substance of all the rest, and endeavour to make our observations bear more particularly upon the circumstances by which in ages that

are past it has in measure been fulfilled, and also upon the various passing events of providence by which it is fulfilling in the present day, and is likely to be still more extensively fulfilled in the future ages of the world.

The reader must bear in mind, that at the period when the Saviour uttered this important prediction, there was not the least apparent probability that the event to which it refers would ever be accomplished. The gospel had then obtained no footing in the world : it had no secular influence to support its pretensions : it held out no temporal prospects whatever to those who embraced it; and besides the absence of these and other similar advantages, which in the eye of reason might appear requisite to support its claims and accelerate its interests, it had on the other hand to encounter the most fearful opposition from the emissaries of the god of this world. The malice of men armed with power, and influenced by pride, rose up in hostile array and threatened its destruction ; its claims were every where disputed, its purity was hated, and its friends and supporters universally treated with contumely and scorn : and, in addition to this, it had also, in order to make its way, to overturn the long established and deeply rooted system of idolatry and superstition, which from time

immemorial had received the veneration of all ranks and classes of mankind. Yet notwithstanding this amount of opposition, and the appalling nature of the task which it consequently had to perform, it completely effected its purpose, and that too within a very short period after its first announcement to the world. The apostles of our Lord, in obedience to his commands, sensible of his authority, and sustained by his power, went forth armed to the conflict; and the pride, the prejudice, the malice which before raised their brazen fronts, opposed their progress, and apparently rendered hopeless, their prospects of success, fell powerless and harmless at their feet. He who gave them their commission accompanied their labours by his blessing, and Satan fell before them like lightning from heaven. The listening multitudes attended to the message of mercy; the Spirit of God applied it with power to the heart; and the idolatrous rites were deserted, and the altars overturned, whilst in every direction Christian churches (the triumphal monuments of the Saviour's victorious grace) rose with the number, the order, and the brilliancy of the stars.

It is not however so much what has been accomplished in ages that are past, as what is actually going forward at the present day,

connected with the fulfilment of this prophecy, that I propose to dwell upon. This subject, it is true, has been referred to in the allusion which I have made to the South Sea islands, and to this and other countries in the foregoing remarks on the destruction of idolatry: but it is by no means exhausted; it embraces a wider range of observation; and the more it is investigated, the more will the inherent evidence which it contains, in support of the divinity and inspiration of the Bible, be unfolded and displayed.

In the cathedral church of St. Paul's in London, there is a tablet erected to the memory of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect under whose superintendence that splendid edifice was reared, and at the foot of this memento of mortality is the following significant inscription, "*Look around*,"—the meaning of which obviously is, that the whole building is his monument, and will remain through future ages a lasting evidence of his genius and his powers. And may I not take up these words as a motto applicable to the subject we are investigating, and say to the unobservant Christian, "*Look around*." Look around upon the world in which you dwell, and say whether the present state of society, the present aspect of the world's affairs, and the general movements

of providence, do not all bear us on to the conclusion that we are on the eve of a mighty moral revolution—that we are rapidly approaching the period when an extensive transformation may be expected—that a vivifying wind is now undoubtedly passing over the face of chaos preparatory to that promised new creation, when the people who have sat in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death, shall feel the enlivening beams of the sun of righteousness, and catch the healing virtues which he sheds from the golden plumage of his wings?

There is also another fact connected with the history of modern times, which ought to be viewed in relation to this great subject, and which is worthy of more than ordinary attention. The fact to which I refer is the present political ascendancy of nations professing Christianity over every other; and in this observation I do not include popery. Popery is not Christianity; it is unworthy the name; it is nothing but a modification of the ancient idolatry, or the idolatry of ancient Greece and Rome grafted on a Christian stock. It is consequently viewed by the sacred writers as a system hostile to the faith of Christ; and its complete ruin is frequently the subject of their prophetic announcements. By Christian-

ity, taking the term in its general acceptation, I mean the sentiments held by the various sections of the Christian Church which make the Bible the only ground of their faith, whatever may be their views on minor points of doctrine, or on the much controverted subject of ecclesiastical polity. And it is a remarkable fact, that the situation of those countries where the religion of the Bible is thus professed and adhered to, is decidedly superior in the present day to what it was a few centuries ago. This no intelligent observer of modern times can possibly fail to perceive. At that and various other periods in the past history of the church, there has alternately existed either Popish, Pagan or Mahomedan nations, which were very powerful, and whose influence was so extensive, that the nations which adhered to pure Christianity could scarcely maintain their standing amongst them. But now the scene in this respect is completely reversed ; they who were once viewed as the head, have now become "the tail" of political influence and power, or rather they have ceased to exert any influence at all. The kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven is in the present day, as described by the prophet Daniel, given to the people of the saints of the Most High, (Dan. vii. 27): that is, it is given

to nations which profess the faith of the gospel according to the definition given of it above. The powerful opposing systems that once existed have all been swept away. Potent heathen monarchs, such as formerly exercised a domineering influence, have all been deprived of their sceptres. Popery is a mere shadow compared with what it once was. Mahomedanism, like her own crescent, is waning to a total eclipse; and Christianity stands forth the unrivalled sovereign over all. She occupies the 'vantage ground over her adversaries, and in her present political relation towards them is placed precisely in that attitude which this Prophet describes as antecedent to the period when her march to universal empire would commence.

The assertion, that the triumph of the gospel will be absolutely universal, and its benignant influence felt through every corner of our guilty globe, may perhaps by some persons be considered a little too bold, and the truth and propriety of it will probably be called in question. It is, however, on this elevated position that we take our stand, and we do it without fear, being fully convinced that we have sufficient authority in the word of God to warrant these high expectations. This is in fact the very point we are endeavouring to prove;

and not only so, but to prove at the same time that the passing events of modern times are all most conspicuously leading us on to the full realization of this great desideratum. It is true, the work which yet remains to be achieved ere this object of our wishes and our hopes can be fully realized, is of no ordinary character ; but “if God be for us, who can be against us.” Let his hand only be kept in view, and then it will be found that we have every reason to anticipate the most extended success ; but if it be lost sight of, unbelief may, and undoubtedly will, in such a moment prevail ; and even the most exalted Christian may then, under the influence of his incorrect and limited views, be ready to ask, “How can these things be ?” and to suppose that the predicted transformation is too wonderful and too glorious ever to be realized. In reference to feelings of despondency like these, we unhesitatingly say, they are unscriptural, and ought not to be encouraged. Let the individual, therefore, who is inclined to indulge in them bear in mind, that “nothing is too hard for the Lord ;” and let him also remember that every event which transpires, however wonderful it may be in itself, ceases to be so when brought into comparison with the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, the great mystery of godli-

ness. God manifest in the flesh is paramount to all other wonders ; and after this nothing is comparatively wonderful ; after this nothing is too much, too great, or too glorious to be expected.

The universal renovation of the world, it must be acknowledged, will be a most astonishing occurrence whenever it takes place ; and were all the great, the wise, and the good men now upon the face of the earth combined to effect it in their own strength, we might well despair of a successful result. But it is said that the God of heaven will do it ; (Dan. ii. 44.) and if he undertake the work it must be accomplished. "He has a mighty arm; strong is his hand, and high is his right hand." Psalm lxxxix. 13. On his single arm therefore we may confidently rely, being assured that the omnipotence of his power, and the faithfulness of his character warrant us to expect the most extensive fulfilment of the promise.

I cannot conclude this part of my subject, without once more reminding the reader (though it may perhaps seem superfluous) of the slow and silent, yet certain progress of Christian truth in this country. The prophetic page asserts that "the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached unto all nations ;" and it has reached this nation, its truths have been proclaimed,

and in spite of all opposition its influence is extending far and wide, and the Hindoos will no doubt ere long have in the historical records of their own country the fact of its triumphs among themselves to bring forward as an additional proof of its divinity, and as an evidence of the fulfilment of the foregoing inspired prediction. The moral dignity of the missionary enterprise begins to be better understood by the natives of India ; and every thing connected with its prospects, to assume a more decided character than it formerly did. Increasing liberality of sentiment, on the subject of education and European science, is becoming generally prevalent; and the means at present employed embrace a wider range, and are better adapted to produce a permanent impression than those of former years. Let the missionaries of the cross only persevere in the use of these means, and they may rest assured that they will by the blessing of God accelerate the final issue of the contest, and lead on to that period when the gods which have not made the earth and the heavens, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens, Jer. x. 11.—will lead on to that period when ignorance and superstition, no longer able to maintain their hold upon the people, shall be compelled to retire

before the growing brightness of eternal truth ; and every corner of the land be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, the fruits of righteousness, and the works of peace.

The day is coming, when the messengers of mercy who have been so long engaged in arduous conflict with the great enemy of the Redeemer's cause in this land, will have the high felicity to see him retreat from the last strong hold, and when it will be theirs to erect in triumph the standard of the cross, and to unfurl the banner of truth in every city, town and hamlet throughout the country. Already have they laid the foundations of a church ; and the glorious super-structure is gradually rising before their eyes. It is gradually increasing in magnitude and strength ; and sustained by the bright visions which the prophetic page unfolds, they look forward with joyful anticipations to the period when, within its ample enclosure millions will yet be found to hymn the praises of their exalted Lord.

The present state of the country in relation to the cause of Christian Missions, and the prospects connected with the future progress of the work, may perhaps not improperly be illustrated by a circumstance which took place a few years ago at the storming of the fortress of Bhurtpore. In consequence of the wall of

that fortress being of mud, it was found impossible by use of artillery to make a breach sufficiently large for the troops to enter, it was therefore determined to undermine and blow up the wall. The necessary excavation being made, a number of barrels of gunpowder were deposited in it, and the troops all under arms ready to enter the breach as soon as the explosion should take place. A gentleman who witnessed the scene thus describes it: "As soon as the match was applied to the train, I fixed my eye on the wall. I immediately perceived a trembling motion in the mass; this was instantly succeeded by a gentle heave; the next moment, one still greater; and then came the vast explosion carrying all before it. In a few minutes the troops entered the breach, and in less than three hours the British flag waved triumphant."

This appears to be a circumstance which strikingly illustrates the present state of things, in reference to the conflict which the servants of Christ are now carrying on with the powers of darkness in India. When we look at the tracts which are circulating through the country, the schools which have been formed, the extent to which the gospel has been preached, the rapidity with which knowledge and literature is circulating, the increasing li-

berality of sentiment, the spirit of enquiry which has gone abroad, the wide spreading scepticism which prevails in reference to the truth of Hindooism, and other favourable signs of the times, all bearing either directly or indirectly upon the accomplishment of this great object, it may fairly be asked, if we are not on the ground of these circumstances fully warranted to say that the mine is prepared, and that the heaving has commenced. Yes ! in the general tone of feeling which pervades all, and especially the higher classes of society, the heaving has undoubtedly commenced, and though it may not proceed with all the rapidity we could desire, yet the final result is not a matter of doubtful speculation. It will, we are persuaded, go on, and ere long be followed by an explosion which will bring down the great fortress of Hindoo idolatry,—an explosion which will shake its strong bulwarks, level its proud battlements, demolish its high towers—which will make way for the servants of Jesus Christ to enter the very citadel, and lead on to that period when the standard of his cross shall be displayed, and the mighty conquests he has won be celebrated in songs of holy triumph through the land.

And this anticipated victory will not, we believe, be confined to the nations of Hindoo-

stan. An aggressive system calculated to undermine the old superstitions is going forward, more or less, in every part of the world ; and the result, whenever it appears, will no doubt be equal to our most sanguine expectations. When the destroying angel passed over Egypt and slew their first born, the Israelites escaped the sword of his vengeance, because they were under the special protection and favour of heaven, and they had as a sign and seal of their security light in all their dwellings, with the blood of the covenant, which was sprinkled on the post of every man's door. And we cannot reject the exhilarating hope, or forbear to look forward to a period, which we believe to be coming in the future history of the world, when the destroying angel shall pass from the centre to the circumference of our globe, when he shall skirt all its boundaries, but shall find no victim, because there will be light in all their dwellings, and the blood of the covenant will be sprinkled on the post of every man's door. We know from him whose word is characterised by faithfulness and truth, that to Jesus Christ every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) He is already exalted to the throne of his mediatorial glory, and he must reign till

he hath put all enemies under his feet. (1 Cor. xv. 25.) The kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. xi. 15.) The world has from time immemorial been his in reversion; and it will ultimately become his in actual and everlasting possession. The poetry of prophecy will ere long be changed into the narrative of fact, and it will be said without a figure that the world is gone after him.

Perhaps the sentiments here advanced may not be in accordance with the views of all who may peruse these pages; our appeal, however, is to the law and to the testimony; we speak the words of truth and soberness, when we assert "that the cause is Christ's, and must prevail." "Events with prophecies agree;" and it is evident from the united testimony of both, that a great and glorious triumph awaits it—a triumph which will be perfect in character, and universal in extent. We are assured by an authority which is unimpeachable; and why should we doubt it? Assured that the conflict which was commenced in Gethsemane, and which was completed on Calvary—the conflict which from time immemorial has been the burden of prophetic song, and the subject of prophetic vision, will continue to extend its

impression and its influence, until the world with the inhabitants thereof submit themselves to the conquering sceptre of the Saviour, who died to redeem, and who is exalted to bless them.

“ His victories and his deathless fame
 Through the wide world shall run,
 And everlasting ages sing
 The triumphs he has won.”

*Of the Prophecies which yet remain to be
 fulfilled.*

The prophecies of this class come third in order, according to the plan of discussion laid down at the commencement of this Section; and they are the last of the biblical prophecies to which we shall invite the reader's attention.

These prophecies embrace a vast variety of subjects, and relate to several points of peculiar interest and importance connected with the movements of future generations, and the diversified changes which are yet to take place in the world. My limits, however, will not allow me to enter upon a general discussion of the various topics to which these predictions relate, nor yet to make from them an extended selection. Brevity in the present protracted state of our argument is of peculiar importance; I shall therefore merely notice the pre-

dictions which refer to the future ingathering of the Jews, and their restoration to the Holy Land.

On this subject, the reader will find the following passages recorded in the word of God. “Fear not : for I am with thee : I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather them from the west ; I will say to the north, Give up ; and to the south, Keep not back : bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” Isaiah xliii. 5, 6. “I will be found of you, saith the Lord : and I will turn your captivity, and I will gather you from all nations, and from all places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord ; I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.” Jer. xxix. 14. “I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria ; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon ; and place shall not be found for them.” Zech. x. 10.

The Bible contains besides these an immense number of prophecies which relate to this interesting subject. In fact, the prophetic pages are tinged with it throughout; it runs like a vein of precious ore through the whole, and is interwoven more or less with all the various statements which relate to the history

of the Jews as a nation. I deem it however unnecessary to multiply quotations, as the above passages may, I apprehend, fairly be considered as expressing the sense of the whole. The purport of these predictions is, that after that dispersion of the Jews (which has before been described) has accomplished the purpose for which God in his providence permitted it to occur; that is, when they are made sensible of their sin, and duly humbled on account of it, the goodness of God will then in a peculiar manner be extended towards them, and will be displayed by turning their captivity and restoring them to the quiet and peaceable possession of the land of their fathers' sepulchres. Neh. ii. 3, 5. It is now nearly 1800 years since their dispersion took place, and these prophecies were severally written from 550 to 750 years before that awful judgment overtook them. Perhaps the reader, when he perceives that I am about to bring these forward as evidence of the truth and inspiration of the Christian scriptures, may be ready to ask what argument can possibly be derived from this source. That is, from prophecies not yet fulfilled and which relate to future and distant ages of the world) in support of the question at issue. In answer to this enquiry I reply, that the argument here is not

drawn from these predictions abstractedly considered, but it is derived from them as viewed in connection with the present state of the Jewish people, and the present aspect of Providence towards them. I have before remarked, that the Jews are scattered through almost every nation upon the face of the earth, that they are universally despised on account of their peculiar customs, and that in all places where they have taken up their abode, they have hitherto lain under various civil disabilities, sustained at different times an overwhelming torrent of persecution, and have been generally treated with cruelty and contempt. They are, therefore, from the circumstances in which they are placed, under the strongest possible temptations to deviate from their own peculiar customs, and to coalesce with the inhabitants of the several countries where they reside; because by doing this they would in a great measure be delivered from the inconveniences to which they are now subjected, in consequence of their remaining a separate people, and be advanced to the privileges and comforts which the native inhabitants of those countries enjoy. The enquiry therefore naturally follows: On what principle are we, under such circumstances, to account for their continued separation and singularity? And the an-

swer as clearly is: On the principle of the superintending power and restraining hand of Him, whose providence watches over and guarantees the fulfilment of his own word. How is it that seeing they have been now 1800 years in this uncomfortable and inconvenient state, they do not renounce their peculiar customs, break down the wall of separation, and intermingle with the aboriginal inhabitants of the several countries where they have taken up their abode? If we examine the Bible, and give credit to its statements, the answer is plain. By it we are taught to believe, that they are under the influence of a supernatural or divine restraint. The Divine Being has a special purpose respecting them to accomplish, which renders this continued separation necessary, otherwise it would no doubt have long since ceased to exist ;* and considering the circumstances under which they are placed, such a coalition must humanly speaking have taken place ages ago. But the fact is, that not one jot nor one tittle of God's word ever can remain unfulfilled ; and as the prophecies which relate to the past have all received their accomplishment, so likewise will those which

* See a few additional remarks on this subject in pages 201—205, where the continued preservation of the Jews as a distinct people is stated and enlarged on.

relate to the future be verified and made good in the appointed time. This word informs us that the omnipotent ruler of the universe purposes to bring them back, and reinstate them as a nation in the land of their fore-fathers. In order therefore to effect this, they must be kept a separate people ; and the providence of God thus superintending their affairs, and keeping them distinct from other nations, with the general aspect of the world, and especially the extensive interest which in several European nations is now excited on their behalf, seem to indicate that the period is not far distant when they will be thus gathered, and when these prophecies, like all the rest recorded in the Bible, shall in every respect receive their full and final accomplishment.

May I not therefore here pause, and appeal to the reader's candid judgment, and ask him to say, whether an additional weight of evidence in support of the truth of the Bible is not thrown into the scale by these prophecies, although they are as yet unfulfilled. The point which we here seize upon, which it is our object to turn to account, and which we wish to bring forward in support of the truth of our position, is the remarkable fact, that the whole arrangements of providence are clearly com-

bining to bring about this event ; that one general and harmonious movement is going on, evidently bearing upon their truth, and shewing us beyond a doubt that they will in due time all be accomplished, that the Jewish nation shall yet appear as the ransomed of the Lord, that "they shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." *Isaiah xxxv. 10.*

To my own mind the evidence arising from prophecy in general, and especially from fulfilled prophecy, is irresistible. This species of evidence, as I have before observed, may be compared to a stream of light darting its celestial rays upon the mental vision—a stream of light striking the eye of the mind which cannot fail, unless that eye be morally diseased or wilfully closed, to produce a full conviction of the truth of the Bible—a conviction which under the teaching of the Holy Spirit will undoubtedly bow the judgment and the will and all the powers of the soul, to its sovereign mandate, and compel them with reverence and humility to submit to its high and unimpeachable authority.

In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to carry out the various prophecies of the Bible into their several ramifications ; and it is

now my wish in concluding this part of the discussion, to collect these scattered rays of light, to bring them into one focus, and to press them with increasing earnestness upon the reader's attention. Let him once more look at these prophecies, take a full view of the whole, contemplate them in all their length and breadth, in all their height and depth, and then candidly ask himself, if he can, in the face of such an overwhelming mass of evidence as that which is derived from them, still continue in the dangerous path of scepticism and infidelity.

The case of the man who can peruse these prophecies and yet remain an unbeliever, appears to me to be desperate indeed. Humanly speaking it is remediless and hopeless. If after careful investigation of the subject, the conviction does not seize his mind, that the book in which they are recorded is the unequivocal and exclusive record of heaven; it then appears, I think, sufficiently evident, that nothing more can be done in the way of argument to convince his judgment, and to deliver him from the galling bondage of that inveterate scepticism with which he must be encrusted. It is true we do not even in such a case limit the power of Omnipotence; but he is certainly beyond the reach of all moral means,

as far as human instrumentality is concerned, and here we must leave him. And we do think we are not going too far when we say, that the man who can resist a testimony so well authenticated, and close his eyes on a mass of evidence so credibly sustained, would resist a voice from the skies; and of such a man it may in truth be said, if he hears not Moses and the prophets, neither would he be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Luke xvi. 31.

SECTION 2.

On the alleged Prophecies of the Hindoo Shastrs.

The evidence in support of the divine authority of the Bible, which is presented in the foregoing Section, must be acknowledged by every reader not wilfully blinded by prejudice, to be full and satisfactory. It cannot, however, reasonably be supposed, that the mind of every man into whose hands this book may fall will be free from this barrier to honest and fair investigation. The human heart is naturally depraved, and in most instances the judgment is biassed by this inherent principle, and led captive under the influence of a mind which is morally diseased: and

if the mind of any of my readers should happen to be held in this state of degrading subjection, it then follows of course that they will not admit of the truth of the above statement, or allow the full blaze of light arising from the evidence previously brought forward, to produce its natural and legitimate effect. If I am not greatly mistaken this will be the case, in no very measured degree, with the majority of the Hindoos who may peruse this work. No people in the world, perhaps, were ever more expert than they are in advancing objections to the authority of revelation ; and certainly no people were ever more expert in using the shield of sophistry, whenever it is required to ward off the force of truth.

Their conduct in this respect is aptly illustrated by the reference which is made to the magicians of Egypt. Exod. vii. 11. When Moses appeared by divine command before Pharaoh, and as a proof of his commission wrought several miracles in his presence, it is said that the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt also did the same with their enchantments. And so in the case before us: let any species of evidence be brought forward in support of the truth of the Bible, let it be of whatever character it may, the Hindoos like these magicians will immediately attempt to mimick it, or to

bring forward something of a similar nature, (whether true or false it matters not,) as an evidence of the supposed inspiration of their *Shastras*. Thus on the subject of prophecy, they meet the Christian advocate with the assertion, that the truth of their sacred writings is attested by a train of evidence similar to what I have advanced in support of the Bible. On urging them, however, as to what these prophecies of the *Shastras* are, all I have been able to learn from them on the subject is in substance as follows: That many changes, it is foretold, will take place in the world, that the people will meet with many troubles and crosses in future ages, that the world will not continue forever, and that a period will ultimately arrive when the natives of Bengal will depart from the faith and worship of their ancestors, and universally become apostates from the religion which from time immemorial has prevailed in the country.

Relative, however, to what is said in their *Shastras* on the subject of future troubles, future changes, and the world's termination, some of their own pundits seem to doubt whether these things can with strict propriety be called prophecies. They relate to events which reason might suggest would at some period or other occur, and which certainly required no influ-

ence from above to enable a thinking man to foresee. With the persons therefore who hold these sentiments I most cordially agree: these statements have certainly no well founded claims to be looked upon in the light of prophecies; for this reason therefore, which I think quite sufficient, I shall pass them by unnoticed. Could their claim to this high character, even though it were but in appearance, be better substantiated, I should of course deem it my duty to remark upon them; but as they merely relate to the common course of events, and to what is perpetually taking place in the world, their claim to be considered prophetic may I think fairly and honestly be rejected.

The subject presents itself to our view under a different aspect, as regards the latter assertion, that Hindooism will ultimately vanish away, and that the people will finally become apostates from the religion of their forefathers. On this statement of their sacred books, the Hindoos appear to be agreed, and the sentiment seems generally to prevail amongst them, that this is a true prophecy. It is argued, moreover, that its truth is illustrated by the passing events of the present day. The Hindoos look at the circumstances which are now taking place in the land; they view this prophecy, as they term it, in connection

with these circumstances, with the attempts which are universally making to spread another religion, and the numbers of their countrymen who have already embraced it, and from this fact they argue that this record of their *Shastrus* is undoubtedly of a true prophetic character, and on the very eve of receiving its accomplishment.*

On these observations of the Hindoos relative to the supposed validity of this prediction, I beg to offer the following remarks.

1. This statement of the *Shastrus* has no more claim to be considered as a true prophecy, than those passages which refer to the troubles of the people, and the destruction of the world. When a man foretells, or pretends to foretell, what is to occur in future years, and confines his statement to a single circumstance, he may perchance make a fortunate hit, and the result may by accident happen to be as he stated it would. This I apprehend to be the case in the present instance. There is certainly nothing very remarkable about this pretended prediction; the event referred to is one which the writers of those *Shastrus* could scarcely fail to perceive would in all probability at some time

* A circumstance most devoutly to be wished, and which every true Christian ought most earnestly to pray for.

or other take place : it therefore by no means proves them to be possessed of any thing more than mere human foresight. But the case is different, when the reference which is made to futurity is not confined to a single statement, but extends to a variety of events. In one or two instances the speaker, guided by his own wisdom and sagacity, may happen to be right ; but it is not likely to be so if he is left to his own judgment in a vast variety of instances ; and the want of this variety, in the case of the Hindoo *Shastrus*, renders it impossible for the advocates of those *Shastrus* to advance any well founded argument of a prophetic character in support of their claims to divine inspiration.

2. Had this statement of the Hindoo *Shastrus* worn much more of a true prophetic air than it now does ; that is, had the statements of the *Shastrus* referred to some circumstance far more unlikely to occur than the one to which reference is made in this supposed prediction, and had the event turned out in accordance with what the *Shastrus* said on the subject, still it would be exceedingly unfair, not to say ridiculous, to claim for them on the ground of this solitary prediction a character of inspiration equal to that which we claim for the Bible. Let the reader bear in mind, that the prophecies of that blessed book are not limit-

ed to a *few*, but that they amount as I have stated before to several hundred in number; let him also recollect that they are in many instances exceedingly minute in their details, that they relate to various ages, characters and nations; that they spread over a vast surface of time, extending in fact to almost every period of the world's future history. No laboured argument therefore is required to prove, that it would be exceedingly unfair to put a single prediction, however well supported, and however literally fulfilled against this invincible phalanx, and to claim for the records in which they are respectively contained an equal degree of authority.

3. Suppose we admit for the sake of argument, that this reference of the *Shastrus* ought to be viewed as a true prophecy, and that we look upon it in the light in which the Hindoos wish us to do, as an evidence of the truth and divine authority of their *Shastrus*, I should then ask, Which of the *Shastrus* do the Hindoos mean to say is proved to be true by it? The whole of them, or any one in particular? The former, I beg leave to remind them, is morally impossible; because their *Shastrus* are quite opposed to each other. They are like the army of the Philistines, mentioned, 1 Sam. xiv. 20, where it is said, that in the general

confusion they went on each beating down his fellow. The sacred writings of the Hindoos bear nothing like a uniform testimony on the all important subject of a sinner's reconciliation to God, or the manner in which his sins are to be pardoned, or in what way God may be acceptably worshipped; whether he ought to be worshipped exclusively and alone, or whether idols only ought to be worshipped, or whether both ought to be worshipped in conjunction. On these and other momentous questions of a similar character, these *Shastrus* are not only totally at variance with each other, but very often at variance with themselves. Like the armies referred to above, they are continually beating down each other by their clashing claims, and opposing statements on these and similar points of importance. To prove therefore that one is true, is in point of fact to prove that all the rest are false; thus, if the Hindoos say that this alleged prophecy proves that the *Pooranus* are true, it then proves that the *Vedu* is false; and if it proves that the *Vedu* is true, it then proves that the *Pooranus* are false, and so on of all the rest. The reader must bear in mind that Hindooism as a system can never be defined, if these *Shastrus* are taken in the gross; and it is a well known fact that this is the way in which they are

taken by the bulk of the people. On this principle, therefore, I do not hesitate to say, that Hindooism presents nothing definite ; nothing tangible, or distinct, to the view of its votaries. It is altogether a chaos of darkness, a bewildering system of confusion ; and the fact, that the *Shastras* are thus totally at variance with each other, is a much more solid argument by which it may be proved that the whole of them are false, than any argument that the Hindoos can bring forward, either from their imagined prophecies or any other source, to prove that any one of them is true.

4. The reason why the statement is made in the Hindoo *Shastras*, that Hindooism will sooner or later be destroyed, must be attributed to the fact, that the persons who framed it knew that it was false, and from this they inferred its instability, having, as they no doubt had, the sagacity to perceive that truth alone would ultimately prevail.

Suppose, for instance, a person builds a large house, the external appearance of which is splendid and imposing, but he knows that the ground on which it is erected is by no means firm ; he knows also that the foundation of the house is defective, and the materials of which it is built are exceedingly inferior : and from his knowledge of these circumstances he affirms

that in the course of a very few years this house will fall. Ought he, I ask, in such a case to be considered as a prophet ? Or ought the people, who live to witness that event, to look upon him in such a light ? Most certainly not. The event, it is true, has occurred exactly as he said it would, and their surprise may be excited when they witness this, if they only looked at the splendour of its external appearance, and were in ignorance as to the rottenness of its foundation, and the insecurity of the ground on which it was built: but it is otherwise with the man who erected it ; it was his knowledge of these very circumstances that caused him to foretell its fall. His antecedent statement of this event cannot therefore by any means be considered as a prophecy, since he was quite aware, at the time when he made this communication, that he was only stating what in the common course of events might naturally be expected to take place. The Hindoo religion, therefore, resembling as it does this house, might naturally be expected to meet with a similar fate. Instead of having truth for its foundation, it is built on the foundation of ignorance, hypocrisy and deceit ; it is not the religion which God has* revealed, but one which was established by impostors for mercenary and po-

itical purposes. The Hindoo legislators, who were the framers and establishers of this religion, had no other end in its propagation than the accomplishment of their own selfish purpose, which was to perpetuate their own authority by putting out the eyes of the people, and bringing them into a state of implicit and degrading subjection. Knowing therefore, as these legislators undoubtedly did, the deception of which they were guilty, and the utter falsehood of that religious system which they were propagating in the world, the declaration which they made respecting it, is by no means to be wondered at: because the investigation of the arrogant claims of this religion, which they might reasonably suppose would take place at some future period would be sure to detect its fallacy, and terminate in its destruction. But let us suppose a case quite the reverse of this. Let us suppose that a person builds a house which has nothing extraordinary or imposing in its external appearance, and instead of predicting that it will ultimately fall, he asserts that it will stand and endure forever,—if the declaration that he thus makes respecting it be fulfilled, we must then acknowledge that he was when he uttered that declaration under the influence of a true prophetic spirit, because such a circum-

stance is contrary to experience, and what could not possibly occur in the common course of events. Let the reader therefore apply this simile to Christianity, and he will find a marked difference between it and Hindooism; and perceive with one glance on what a different foundation the authority of the two religions rests; whilst the former house is an emblem of Hindooism, the latter is an emblem of Christianity. Truth is the foundation of this religion; and it has been, as is evident from observation, and still continues to be, shielded by a divine power, and therefore it will never, never fall. When this religion was first established in the world, the overwhelming opposition which it had to encounter* indicated to all human appearance its speedy termination, and threatened its entire destruction; but the predictions of its Author asserted, and that in the most positive terms, that such would never be its fate. Instead of prognosticating, as the Hindoo legislators did of their religion, that it would speedily be brought to ruin, he set at nought the whole of these disastrous appearances, and instead of taking them as a crite-

* The subject of this page is enlarged upon in the section on the spread of the Gospel, to which the reader will do well to refer. See also page 224 on the second class of prophecies fulfilling in the present day.

tion of its ephemeral destiny, he foretold that its triumphs would be universal, and its stability be secured and perpetuated to the end of time. We are therefore brought under a sort of moral compulsion to acknowledge the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion. From this conclusion there is no rational way of escape; and this is, in point of fact, the only solid principle on which we can possibly account for succeeding circumstances so remarkably confirming, as they have done, his interesting prophetic declaration concerning its permanence and stability.

I need not ask my Hindoo readers whether they can bring forward any evidence of this nature, as a proof of the truth of their sacred writings. It is clear, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they cannot; and it is only folly, ignorance, and disingenuousness which induce them to attempt it. The man who supposes that a body of evidence can be advanced in support of Hindooism, similar to that which arises from the multitude, variety, and harmony of the prophecies contained in the Christian Scriptures, and which in so many instances are daily continuing to be fulfilled before our eyes, is labouring under a most fatal delusion, and can only be looked upon as the dupe of a bewildered imagination. As for the pretend-

ed prophetic declaration to which I have just referred, this, instead of in any way supporting the truth of the Hindoo religion, ought rather to be looked upon as a confirmation of its falsehood, and a proof of the duplicity of its authors. But when, on the other hand, we contemplate the contrary description which is given of Christianity—when we hear its Author assert that it shall spread and stand forever—when we recollect that this assertion was made when the existing appearance of things indicated its fate to be quite the reverse—when we bring the testimony of facts to bear upon this assertion, and perceive by various events which have occurred, and which are daily occurring, in the world, that it has been, and is still continuing to be, more and more circumstantially fulfilled,—we are, as a natural and necessary consequence, constrained to acknowledge that the fulfilment of this very prediction ought to be viewed as subsidiary to the evidence afore-stated of the truth of the Christian Scriptures. It may moreover be considered as furnishing another indubitable proof of the divine authority of the Redeemer's mission, and is an additional testimony to the truth of that declaration which fell from his lips, and which is recorded by the evangelist John, chap. xii. 49, 50, “ I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent

me, he gave me a commandment, what I should speak ; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

It is not therefore, as the reader may easily perceive, the want of evidence in support of the truth of the Christian Scriptures that leads the Hindoos to reject them ; the cause of this rejection is to be traced to another source. It is to be feared that it has its origin in causes of a moral character,—that "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil :" and we know, and that on the most satisfactory testimony, that " every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." John iii. 19, 20.

Could I present to the Hindoos some newly devised scheme of a commercial character—could I shew them that the line of commercial enterprise which they at present pursue is exceedingly disadvantageous to them, and that by adopting the scheme I proposed they would be immense gainers in every respect,—if when called upon for a proof wherewith to substantiate and make good my assertion, I could then shew that I was correct, and could prove that the speculation I proposed would be a profitable one, by evidence only one-tenth in amount when compared with that which I have from the

subject of prophecy alone brought forward to prove the truth of the Bible, every Hindoo in the country I am persuaded would listen to me. I should be looked upon as a public benefactor; my evidence would be considered as amounting almost to demonstration, and all would be ready to try their fortune and embark in the newly proposed undertaking. The question therefore naturally presents itself: Why do not the Hindoos, if the evidence in favour of the Bible is of such an overwhelming nature, receive it in the character which it claims as a revelation from God? And how is it, we may ask on the other hand, that they would listen to a scheme of commercial enterprise, and be ready to embark in it on a far slighter degree of evidence that it would turn out to their advantage? The case is clear to a demonstration; it is the perversion of the moral principle—it is the love of the thing that induces them to listen to it in one case, and it is the hatred of the thing that induces them to reject it in the other. The evidence of truth in both cases is a matter of secondary importance. Inclination and desire assume the reins of government, and obtaining as they do the mastery over reason and judgment, become in both cases the propelling spring of action. There is an old English proverb which

says, that “none are so blind as those that *will* not see;” and it is to be feared that it is this kind of blindness which closes the eyes of many of the Hindoos to the authority and inspiration of the Bible. They will not see, because it is not as they suppose their interest to do so. But when God’s hand is lifted up, as it ultimately *will* be, then they will see and be ashamed. (Isaiah xxvi. 11.) If they do not (or rather, *will* not) see their error now, they will undoubtedly discover it on that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest—when the great Judge of quick and dead, arrayed in robes of majesty, shall come to receive his redeemed people to himself, to dwell with him “in glory everlasting.”

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE ARGUMENT WHICH IS DERIVED FROM THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST STATED.

The reanimation and restoration to life of a person that has been dead, and laid in the grave, is a most wonderful occurrence, which it is beyond the power of ordinary causes to effect, and such an event as, (with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose resurrection from the dead is the subject to be considered in the present chapter, with one or two others who were raised by his power,) was never before heard of, and probably never will be heard of again whilst the world stands.

When the cavilling Jews came to Christ, and requested him to give them a sign in confirmation of his divine mission, he refused to comply with their request. Instead of granting them the sign they required, he referred them to his resurrection, which was shortly to take place, as a sufficient sign, and a convincing proof, that he was a teacher sent from God ; and stated at the same time, that if they would

not acknowledge this as a sign, and receive it as a confirmation of the truth and justice of his claims, no other testimony would be given them. Matth. xii. 38—40.

Christ having, by this address to the Jews, made his resurrection the test by which the truth or falsehood of his claims to a divine mission may be ascertained, we are warranted, by the authority which we derive from this appeal, to examine it accordingly. To this test, therefore, as the touchstone of its truth, let us now bring it; and after an impartial investigation, let it stand or fall, in proportion to the sufficiency or deficiency of the evidence which is brought forward in proof of its actual occurrence.

If the propriety of this principle be acknowledged, and we proceed to act upon it as the ground of our future examination, the state of the argument before us will then be as follows. Christ before his crucifixion asserted that he would rise from the dead, and he rested the truth of his mission as a divine teacher upon the fulfilment of this assertion. He made this the test or evidence by which it was ultimately to be proved whether he was, or was not, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. If therefore it can clearly be shewn, and that by a body of indubitable and

well attested evidence, that he actually did rise from the dead, according to his own word, then the divine authority of his mission, and the truth of the Christian Scriptures, as involved in and connected with that mission, must as a necessary consequence be acknowledged to be satisfactorily established thereby. All therefore that we have to do is to obtain full satisfaction on this point, by investigating (as we purpose to do in the following Section) the character and weight of the evidence by which his resurrection in the New Testament history is attested.

SECTION I.

View of the Evidences of Christ's Resurrection.

Before we attempt to prove the fact of the Saviour's having actually risen from the dead, it is necessary, in the first place, satisfactorily to establish the fact of his death. The four evangelists have all written at length on this subject, and they have all given us a full and circumstantial account of the various particulars connected with his crucifixion: and the fact of his being actually dead before he was taken down from the cross is abundantly confirmed by the whole of them, especially by the evangelist Mark in his Gospel, chap. xv. 42,

and following verses ; where Pilate's precaution in sending for the Roman centurion, and questioning him in order to be satisfied on this subject, before he delivered the body into the hands of Joseph for burial, is particularly recorded.

The reality of his death being, as it is in these verses, sufficiently authenticated, the place of his burial next demands our attention. On this subject, the same inspired penman has informed us, (and his testimony is corroborated by all the other evangelists, who have separately noticed the event,) that he was buried in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock : and from the account which he has given us, that a great stone was afterwards rolled to the door of the sepulchre, we infer that this sepulchre was hewn out of a solid rock, which entirely precluded any admission into its interior, except through the door by which the body had been conveyed. The consideration, therefore, of the precaution which was used to ascertain the reality of the Redeemer's death—the security of the place in which he was buried—and the impossibility of releasing the body in any other way than through the door by which it was originally deposited in this gloomy prison of the grave,—will, if we keep these different bearings of the subject in view, enable

us correctly to appreciate the weight of that evidence which now comes under our notice, in confirmation of the truth of his resurrection.

In the closing part of the history of the Saviour's life, we are informed, that his enemies the Jews were acquainted with his previous prediction relative to this important event. In order, therefore, to prevent the body from being stolen, and a false report in consequence of it propagated amongst his followers, that he had, according to his declaration, risen from the dead, they took the precaution to obtain from Pilate a guard of Roman soldiers; which, for the better security of the sepulchre, they placed at its entrance, to keep watch, and see that no imposition was practised. In addition to this, the Governor also gratified them by sealing with the great seal of the empire, the stone by which the mouth of the sepulchre was secured, and which it was death by the Roman law for any man to break without his permission. These transactions the reader, if he wishes, may be fully acquainted with, by perusing the account which we have of them in the Gospel by Matthew, chap. xxvii. 62, and following verses. We need not, however, confine our attention to the testimony of a single individual : the four evangelists have all written on this subject; and if we compare their

respective histories, and are open to conviction, we must acknowledge, that the precautions which they state to have been used, prevented all possibility of deception in this important affair. Consequently the account which they have separately given us of the resurrection, in the concluding chapters of the Gospels of which they are severally the authors, undoubtedly may, as it accords with all that collateral writers have advanced upon the subject, be relied upon as correct, since it is the testimony of faithful, competent witnesses to a fact which happened under their own immediate observation.

The evangelist Matthew, in his history, has noticed several circumstances, connected with the resurrection, which the others, who subsequently wrote, have omitted. Whilst, therefore, the perusal of all which these inspired authors have recorded on the subject is recommended to the reader, his attention is particularly requested to the 28th chapter of this evangelist's Gospel, where he will find it related, that notwithstanding all the precautions of the Jews, on the third day, the precise period which the Redeemer had previously specified, he arose, in exact conformity to his prediction, a triumphant and everlasting conqueror over death and the grave.

In the passage to which the reader's attention is here directed, we have, in addition to the testimony of the disciples of Christ, also the testimony of the Roman guard, as to the certainty of the fact recorded: and the reader can scarcely fail to be struck, when he compares the histories of these inspired writers with the numerous witnesses by whom this important fact is attested. It is not possible to specify the exact number of times that the Saviour appeared to his disciples during the forty days that he continued on earth after his resurrection; it is however sufficiently clear from the several accounts which they have respectively furnished of the event, that he appeared no fewer than five times on the very day that he arose: viz. first, to Mary Magdelene alone, (Mark xvi. 9.); secondly, to Mary, the wife of Alpheus, and Salome, the wife of Zebedee, on their way from the sepulchre, (Matth. xxviii. 9, and Mark xvi. 1.); thirdly, to Simon Peter alone,* (Luke xxiv. 34.); fourthly, to the two disciples in their way to Emmaus, (Luke xxiv.

* We have various circumstances connected with all the other appearances of Christ related by one or the other of the four evangelists. We are not however furnished with any account of the manner in which this appearance to Peter took place; but the reality of it notwithstanding this is sufficiently clear, for besides the passage specified above, the apostle Paul distinctly refers to it, 1 Cor. xv. 5.

15.); and fifthly, to the whole of the apostles, except Thomas, who happened to be absent on that occasion, (Luke xxiv. 36, John xx. 19,24.) We learn also from the writings of the apostle Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 6,) that within a short period after this he appeared to no fewer than 500 brethren at once, the major part of whom were living to bear witness to the fact when this letter of the apostle was addressed to the Corinthian church. This interview, it appears, took place in Galilee, where our Lord had principally resided, and preached, and done his wonderful works. Before his death he had said, "After I am risen I will go before you into Galilee;" and on the morning of his resurrection, we find that an angel knew of this design, and therefore meeting with the women he said to them, "Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead : and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there ye shall see him; lo, I have told you." Influenced by this authority the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them ; from whence it appears that the very spot had been named; and from the words of the apostle it is certain that the disciples did not repair to it alone, but having made known among their connections the approaching interview which they anticipated

with their risen Saviour, they enjoyed the privilege in company with the large assembly referred to in the above passage.*

Now if human testimony in any case can possibly be relied on, we must certainly think that the united and well supported testimony of the numerous witnesses to the actual occurrence of the important event we are investigating, is certainly worthy of credit. To suppose for a moment that they were deceived is to suppose that which in their circumstances it was utterly impossible could take place. The fact which they have attested was open to in-

* "The effect which was wrought on the mind of the celebrated Gilbert West by that particular evidence of our Lord's resurrection which was afforded to his apostles was very remarkable. He and his friend Lord Littleton, both men of acknowledged talents, had imbibed the principles of infidelity from a superficial view of the Scriptures. Fully persuaded that the Bible was an imposture, they were determined to expose the cheat. Mr. West chose the Resurrection of Christ, and Lord Littleton the Conversion of St. Paul, for the subject of hostile criticism. Both sat down to their respective tasks full of prejudice and a contempt for Christianity. The result of their separate attempts was truly extraordinary. They both were converted by their endeavours to overthrow the truth of Christianity. They came together not as they expected, to exult over an imposture exposed to ridicule, but to lament their own folly, and to felicitate each other on their joint conviction that the Bible is the word of God. And their enquiries have furnished two most valuable treatises in favour of revelation; one entitled, 'Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul,' and the other, 'Observations on the Resurrection of Christ.'"

vestigation ; they had the evidences of their senses ; and acquainted as they were with the person of the Redeemer, could not be mistaken in their endeavours to identify him. They repeatedly saw him—recognised him in his deportment—knew him by the print of the nails in his hands and his feet, and the mark of the spear in his side—they conversed with him—they ate and drank with him—they received and acted according to his commands—they saw him visibly ascend to heaven, and afterwards themselves wrought miracles by a power which he communicated to them ; and this appears to be as far as evidence of any kind can extend, or can possibly be required ; and therefore there is no alternative, if we wish to act like reasonable men, but to give our assent to the truth of their testimony.

The reality of the Redeemer's resurrection has been objected to, in consequence of his not having afterwards appeared amongst his enemies as he was accustomed to do previous to his death.

In reference to this objection, however, we remark, that “ apart from all considerations of the dignity, and propriety which were due to his state of incipient glory, it is manifest that injury rather than benefit would have accrued to the evidence of the case from such an ex-

posure. If the Jewish rulers had persisted in their unbelief, or rather affectation of unbelief, which their whole conduct renders the more probable supposition, the partizans of infidelity would have laid hold on this circumstance as a plea against the sufficiency of the proofs. If, on the other hand, they had declared themselves convinced, it would have been said with more plausibility than commonly belongs to infidel arguments, that a coalition had been effected between Jesus and his former opponents; and that the whole series of transactions, his trial and crucifixion, his apparent death, the guard set over his tomb, and the results which followed, had been managed collusively by the men who had all the power which such an attempt required. A suspicion might thus have been excited, which could not have been easily wiped away; and we should have been deprived of that guarantee against the possibility of a deep laid scheme to deceive, which we now derive from the determined hostility of the persons who occupied the seats of authority, and who had both every motive ~~and~~ every means to detect a fraudulent scheme, if it had existed."

Besides this, there appears to have been other reasons why the Saviour should pursue a different line of conduct after his resurrection to

what he did antecedent to that event. The foundation of his kingdom was now laid, and the means for its permanent establishment secured. He had, by pouring out his soul unto death, finished the work which his Father gave him to do; and the general testimony which, as the living and true witness, he was designated to bear to the world, he had faithfully discharged, and fully accomplished. The necessity of his continued public appearance consequently ceasing to exist, he then, as might reasonably be expected, withdrew from the world, and confined the favour of his future visits to that little band of his faithful followers which he had chosen out of it, and whom, as his witnesses, he appointed to publish the glad tidings of his salvation throughout the earth.

In addition to these reasons, we may also observe, that the evidence which Christ had previously given, that his message was divine, was amply sufficient to convince all his opposers, had they not been hardened in their obstinacy and infidelity. It was not more evidence that they required, or that was necessary, but a heart more disposed to receive that which had already been given them: and the argument in this respect applies as much to us as it does to them. It is in vain to require addi-

tional testimony, as some amongst the Hindoos do, or rather pretend to do. We are required to believe on the evidence which God has already given: and as this evidence is abundantly sufficient to convince every reasonable enquirer, the guilt of all who reject Christianity for want of more is inexcusable: and we are assured by Him who “is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent,” that the wrath of God must for ever abide on all such persons; and that they will, as the consequence of it be cast into that outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. John iii. 36, Matth. xxii. 13.

SECTION 2.

Further Remarks on the Resurrection, with the Evidence derived from it in Support of the Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures.

In the foregoing Section, the fact of the Redeemer's resurrection must be acknowledged by every candid enquirer to be established by a body of evidence so solid and satisfactory, that no reasonable doubt can possibly be entertained of its actual occurrence. But as the Jews, in order to invalidate the force of this evidence, propagated a report that his disci-

ples came by night and stole him away ; to the refutation of this calumny, which evidently has its foundation in malice and falsehood, our attention must now be directed. In the gospel by St. Matthew, chap. xxviii. 11—15, we have an account of the circumstances in which this report originated. The reader having perused this passage, which on account of its length I must necessarily omit, I request his attention to the following observations.

The sepulchre in which the Redeemer's body was deposited, the evangelist informs us, was a new one, in which no man had ever before been laid. Now in this event, trifling as it may appear, we evidently see the hand of God ; for, had other bodies previously been deposited in it, some persons no doubt would have pretended collusion, and the evidence would not have been so simple and complete as it now is, in consequence of the body having lain there alone.

But the circumstance which seems chiefly to place the fact of his resurrection beyond the shadow of a doubt, arises from the peculiar situation of the sepulchre in which the body was deposited. It was not a grave dug in the earth, but it was, as we have before remarked, of solid stone hewn out of a rock. There was therefore but one avenue leading to it, and

consequently no person could approach it either from the sides or behind; and at this only entrance by which admission could be obtained into its interior, there was placed a strong guard of Roman soldiers. Does it therefore, I ask, appear at all likely, that Christ's eleven unarmed disciples would madly rush upon destruction; which they must have done by venturing upon so dangerous an experiment as an attempt to steal away his body under such circumstances? If they made this attempt and succeeded, (which according to this assertion of the Jews they did) we must acknowledge that they were the most valiant and courageous of men; but an appeal to facts will, if we are free from prejudice, soon convince us that the contrary was the case. If we review their former conduct we shall find, that when the officers of the Jewish Sanhedrim seized Christ, and danger presented itself to view, they displayed neither courage nor valour. Instead of magnanimously standing by their Master in this hour of danger, we are informed by the evangelist Mark, (xiv. 50,) that they all forsook him, and fled. If, therefore, when Christ was alive, and needed their countenance and support, they had not the courage to stand by him, but were alarmed and fled at the trivial danger which then presented itself to view,

can it possibly be for a moment supposed, that they would, in circumstances of so much greater danger, have the courage to appear for him when dead; and by an attempt to rescue his body, expose, as they must have done, their own lives in so hazardous and useless a manner? A slight attention, therefore, to the absurdity of this report, will soon convince us, that a serious attempt to refute it is unnecessary; for contradicting, as it does, both reason and experience, it thereby carries its own refutation along with it, and evidently appears to be the fabrication of men who were at their wits' end to get rid of a fact, the glaring evidence of which they knew not how to withstand. If the Roman soldiers, according to this report, had really been guilty of so notorious an offence as sleeping whilst on military duty, why was the martial law of that warlike people, by which for this offence they were liable to the punishment of death, instead of being put into execution against them, suffered to sleep likewise?* If the truth of this report

* The Roman military law inflicted the punishment of death upon a soldier if he were found asleep whilst upon duty. And we have an instance recorded in Acts xii. quite to the point, in which the law was ordered to be carried into execution by Herod, on the supposition that the soldiers there mentioned had suffered the prisoners of whom they were in charge to escape through

be admitted; the disciples also must have incurred the penalty of death, in breaking the seal by which the Roman Governor had secured the entrance to the sepulchre. Why then, if their guilt could be established, was the civil law suffered to sleep, as well as the military? Why, if guilty of so heinous a crime, were they all, instead of suffering the sentence of the law, permitted to escape with impunity? Suppose that, according to this common report, the body had actually been stolen, the question naturally arises, Where was it deposited? Why was it not sought for, and being found, which might easily have been accomplished, exposed to the view of the populace? The Jews, by doing this, would have effectually demonstrated the guilt of the disciples, proved their declaration of his resurrection to be a falsehood, and at once have put an end to the further spread of the Christian religion. It is singular, that under such circumstances, they never attempted, by

their neglect of duty. The fact, therefore, that no punishment was ever inflicted on the soldiers in the case specified above, clearly proves that they were not guilty—that they were not asleep, but that the whole was a mere story got up by the Chief Priests and their party to save their credit. There is, moreover, something absurd in the idea of the soldiers' affirming that his body was stolen, when according to their own confession they were asleep. How could they depose to a fact which occurred (if it really did occur) when they were in a state of unconsciousness?

an appeal to facts, to confirm the truth of their assertion—that the stolen body was never sought for—that the delinquent soldiers, with the offending disciples, instead of being brought to justice for the offence of which (according to their statement) they had severally been guilty, and punished with death as the law of the land required, were all allowed to escape, without any criminal process whatever being ever instituted against them. The fact is, the Jews could not substantiate their assertion. Policy, therefore, dictated the propriety of omitting such an investigation, as it must necessarily have exposed their hypocrisy and falsehood, and placed, to the everlasting ruin of their cause, the truth of the Redeemer's resurrection in a more prominent and satisfactory point of view. There cannot indeed be a more convincing proof of the falsehood of this charge, which they brought against the Redeemer's disciples, of their having stolen away the body, than what is derived from Acts ii. 23, 24, and iv. 10. There we find the apostle Peter, in the most public manner, boldly addressing, in the first place, the people, and afterwards their rulers; and testifying before them, that God had “raised from the dead that Jesus whom they with wicked hands had crucified and slain.” Why then, if this assertion was a

falsehood, and the disciples had stolen away the body, did they suffer it to pass uncontadicted? Their silence on this occasion evidences, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that they were convinced of the truth of his statement. It speaks more than a thousand arguments, and demonstratively proves, that they both felt and knew, that the wicked fabrication of which they had been guilty was so grossly apparent, that they could not, without the most determined audacity, possibly persevere in it.

Waving, therefore, as unnecessary, any further remarks on this objection, I pass on to notice another, with which the enemies of Christianity have endeavoured to undermine its sacred foundations, and defend the cause of their own desperate infidelity. It has been observed, that admitting the disciples of Christ were free from the guilt and knavery with which the Jews charged them, in first stealing the body of their Master, and then reporting to the world that he had arisen from the dead; yet may it not be supposed, that they were a company of weak, credulous, and superstitious men, who were in some way or other imposed upon, and made to believe in the reality of his resurrection, although in fact no such event ever took place?

To this objection I reply, that however plausible it may appear, it is nevertheless dictated by sophistry, and too weak to stand before an impartial investigation. If we bring it to the testimony of facts, and compare it with the various traits of the character and conduct of the apostles, as they are pourtrayed in the evangelical history, we shall soon be convinced, that instead of being weak and superstitious men, they were quite the reverse. There is not a single instance left on record, which can lead us to believe, that they were inclined to credit every idle report brought before them. It is a well attested circumstance, that not one of them assented to the truth of the resurrection, on the ground of mere testimony. They required the evidence of sense ; and making this, as they did, the test of its truth, they one and all persevered in an obstinate infidelity, refusing to give their assent to the fact of its actual occurrence, until this evidence was obtained.

When the circumstance was first announced to them by the women, on the morning of the day on which it took place, they entirely disregarded it. Their words, it is said, seemed to them as idle tales, Luke xxiv. 11. Their pertinacious rejection also of the proof by which its reality was attested, brought upon them the

severe rebuke of their Lord, “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” Luke xxiv. 25, 26; and it was not until they were overcome by the force of evidence so strong that they could no longer resist it, that they at last came to the conclusion, “The Lord is risen indeed.” Luke xxiv. 34.

We learn from the history of this important event, as it is recorded in the Gospels, that Christ did not immediately after his resurrection appear to the collective body of his disciples, but to detached parties of two, three, or more of them as they were found together. In one instance he appeared to the whole of the apostles except one, viz. Thomas, who happened to be absent on that occasion. On his rejoining their society, they immediately communicated the information to him, telling him, as they doubtless did with hearts elated with joy, that they had seen the Lord; and yet their united testimony was, we are informed, insufficient to convince him of the reality and truth of the fact. Instead of believing the intelligence, supported as it was by so many accredited witnesses, he replied, (John xx. 25,) “ Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of

the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." From this, as well as various other statements relating to the same subject, it appears that the apostles, instead of being weak and superstitious men, and therefore liable to be imposed upon, were quite the reverse. Their assent to the truth of the Saviour's resurrection was with difficulty obtained; they were cautious to an unnecessary degree, repeatedly rejecting in the exercise of their incredulity the most satisfactory testimonial evidence, by which it could possibly be confirmed.

In addition to what I have advanced in the way of reasoning on this important subject, I now request the reader's attention to what is recorded in the Scriptures on the gift of the Holy Spirit. To this we may appeal as a conclusive fact; which, substantiating as it does the undoubted reality of the resurrection, is of more worth than a thousand arguments, and to our utmost satisfaction completely terminates the controversy. This inestimable blessing was a boon which God from the beginning designed to bestow upon the Christian church. This gift, however, was not imparted on the first preaching of the gospel, but was reserved for a season, in order to confirm the Redeemer's resurrection, and honour his ascension. We are therefore told, (John vii. 39,)

that “ the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” In John xvi. 7, Christ especially promises to send the Spirit as a Comforter to his disciples after his exaltation; and in Acts i. 8, we find a repetition of the same promise, which he gave to them after the resurrection, with a command to continue in Jerusalem until it was fulfilled. In the second chapter of the same book, the important and interesting fact of the fulfilment of this promise, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, is recorded; with an ample statement, which is corroborated by various other passages of Scripture, of the wonderful effects which followed, in the power to work miracles, and the gift of tongues, which he communicated to the apostles, and the rapid and almost universal spread of the gospel which immediately took place. It is also pleasing to all who feel interested in the cause of Christianity to recollect, that although the influences of this Divine Agent have frequently been suspended in measure, yet they have never been entirely withdrawn from the church. In the present day, He is still carrying on his ordinary, but not less effective operations, by quickening the dead in trespasses and sins, by subduing the power of sin in the hearts of men, by bending their stubborn wills in holy submis-

sion to the Saviour, and by extending and establishing his kingdom more and more in the world.

An appeal to this fact, we therefore conceive, is sufficient to bring the matter in dispute at once to an issue. The Saviour's resurrection, which is the subject of our enquiry, is by this descent of the Holy Spirit, and by his continued operations in the church, established on the most solid basis. By this it is satisfactorily ascertained, and incontestibly proved, that he actually did rise from the dead, according to his own previous declaration:—consequently by his thus rising, (which event he antecedently referred to, as the test or standard of subsequent appeal,) he has demonstratively proved the truth and divine authority of his mission, and also of the Christian Scriptures, which being the records of that mission, are of necessity equally substantiated by the same glorious and triumphant event.

Should the reader not be able to comprehend the force of this reasoning, he will, if he attend to the following illustration, by which the argument is brought to bear upon the subject of our investigation, be convinced that the inference which in this concluding paragraph I have drawn from the resurrection is both natural and correct. Suppose a man be-

comes surety for his neighbour, and engages, as his neighbour's security, to pay, in case of his inability, a certain sum of money. Should he on this account be afterwards arrested, and thrown into prison for payment of the stipulated sum, it of course follows, that he will not be liberated from his confinement until he has fulfilled his engagement, or in some way or other made satisfaction to the parties to whom, by his voluntary contract, he made himself responsible. So Christ, the great and exclusive surety of mankind, was arrested by the justice of God, on account of the sins of men which he had engaged to expiate, and confined in the prison of the grave. His liberation, therefore, from that prison, proves that his expiatory sacrifice was accepted, and that the debt which he had engaged to defray was fully discharged; because nothing but this could possibly have procured his release. Had he not been a divine teacher, or had his work not been fully perfect in every respect, he would have remained, as all men in the ordinary course of nature do, in the prison of the grave to the present day. The satisfactory manner, therefore, in which his resurrection is substantiated, and the sufficiency of proof which arises from it in confirmation of the truth and divine authority of the Bible, and of the divine

message which, being as he was a teacher sent from God, he bore to mankind, were there no other proof, are of themselves sufficient to satisfy every reasonable and candid enquirer, that the Bible is, and that it alone is, the true revelation which, as a light shining in a dark place, God has graciously given to direct a guilty and benighted world into the way of life and salvation.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE SUFFERINGS AND CONDUCT OF THE
APOSTLES.PRINCIPLES OF THE ARGUMENT DERIVED FROM
THE LABOURS AND SUFFERINGS OF THE APOS-
TLES IN THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Selfishness, it is evident to every observer of mankind, is a prevailing principle, and distinguishing trait of the human character. A desire to promote the public welfare enters but little into the actions of the generality of men. Hence it is, that whilst multitudes, under the influence of the above-stated principle, are ever found ready to engage in hazardous and painful undertakings, there are but few in the world who have sufficient philanthropy to sacrifice, by a life of painful self-denial, their private interest and personal comfort at the altar of public benevolence.

Attested and confirmed as the truth of this observation is by our every-day experience, we are, by our knowledge of this commonly prevailing rule of action, naturally led, if we see a man undertake a difficult and dangerous en-

terprise, to conclude that personal aggrandizement, in some way or other, must necessarily be the object of his pursuit.

Let us, by way of illustration, suppose that we actually beheld a person engaged in an enterprise of this nature; and, instead of taking it for granted that his motives are base and dishonourable, and immediately passing upon him a sentence of condemnation, let us suppose that we enter into a close examination of his conduct, and in the course of this examination it appears, on the clearest evidence, that he is a man of integrity, and not influenced in his undertaking by any thing mean or calculated to degrade his character:—furthermore, suppose we discover to our astonishment, that the undertaking in which he has engaged, demands far more costly sacrifices than we had previously imagined; that it subjects him to all that is revolting to the natural feelings of man, and perpetually exposes him to death, in the most terrible and terrific forms:—suppose also, that by this investigation it is clearly demonstrated, that in the course of painful exertion which he uniformly pursues, he is not influenced by the love of wealth, neither by a spirit of ambition, nor by any other desire to promote his own private interests:—suppose, moreover, that it is ascertained, and proved with equal clearness,

that he is not a fanatic, nor labouring under any mental delusion, but is in the full possession of his reasoning powers, and has evidently a correct idea of what he is about, and a clear perception of the object he has in view;—then (although that object may be unknown to us, and we may not be fully able to enter into his views or appreciate his motives) we must at least do him the justice to acknowledge that he is under the influence of some extraordinary principles, and some stimulus to action not common to mankind in general.

Allow me to prosecute this illustration still further, and to suppose that in our endeavours to ascertain the real and mysterious motives by which the individual I have here described is actuated in his voluntary labours, and painful exertions, we learn, either directly from himself, or indirectly from others who have received correct information on the subject, that the secret spring of his actions is an extraordinary communication which he professes to have received from the Deity:—to this communication, we learn, is annexed a command, by which he is required to make the contents of it known to the world; and it is therefore in obedience to this command, and with a view to promote the happiness of mankind, which is intimately connected with their knowledge of

this revelation, that he thus labours and exposes himself to privation and suffering ;—we must, on making such a discovery as this, certainly acknowledge, that so far as he is individually concerned, he undoubtedly has an implicit faith in the truth of the communication which he professes to have received. He gives by his conduct, in subjecting himself to a life of patient self-denial, a demonstrative proof that he is an honest and sincere man, since he evidently pursues, on the ground of principle and conviction, what he considers to be the plain straightforward path of duty.

Admitting that a case exactly corresponding with what I have here supposed came under our observation, what, I ask, would be the inference which we should draw from this testimony of the sincerity of this extraordinary character ? If we did not look upon it as amounting to satisfactory proof, yet we must, I think, according to all the common principles of action, at least acknowledge that it ought to be considered as a strong presumptive evidence that he actually has, according to his profession, received a communication from above.

Now the application of these remarks to the subject under our review is as follows :—The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ pursued a

line of conduct precisely the same as the individual in this illustration is supposed to pursue. In their endeavours to propagate the Christian faith, they went through a series of labours and sufferings, and encountered a train of difficulties and trials, quite unprecedented in the history of the world.

In surveying therefore the labours and persecutions which they underwent in this cause, we are forced upon some one of the three following conclusions, as the only rational reason that can possibly be assigned for their extraordinary conduct and continued patient endurance of such accumulated trials.

1. We must acknowledge that whilst exerting themselves in the cause of Christianity, they were imposed upon, and that they laboured under mistaken views of the character of Christ, and the objects of his mission; or,

2. If this were not the case,—if they were not imposed upon, it then follows that they were themselves impostors, and endeavouring, for the purpose of compassing some secular object, to impose upon others; and that under the influence of this motive they proclaimed the Christian religion to be true, when at the same time they knew that it was false. But if neither of these suppositions be tenable, it then follows,

3. That it was the full and firm conviction of the truth of this religion which pervaded their minds, which supported them under the pressure of their afflictions, and enabled them, through divine assistance, to encounter so many difficulties in their endeavours to promote its interests in the world.

Now as to the first of these suppositions we unhesitatingly avow, that the apostles of our Lord could not possibly be deceived. The circumstances in which they were placed, the intercourse which they continually held with him, and the many opportunities with which they were favoured of examining the credentials of his mission, precluded this, and must have enabled them to detect the fraud had there been any. It has been well remarked, that the two senses of touch and vision are seldom both imposed upon at the same time; and both of these, in the case of the apostles, were brought repeatedly to bear upon the miracles of the Redeemer, the great credentials by which his mission was attested. Had many of the pretended miracles, by which impostors have imposed so frequently upon the vision of mankind in ages that are past, been brought to the test of the other sense, the fraud would have been forthwith discovered to the world. The apostle John, therefore, referring to this sub-

ject, and with a view to shew the certain test to which he and his companions in tribulation had brought the facts to which Christianity appealed for the support of its authority, says, “That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and which our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.”

If therefore the apostles were not themselves deceived, it consequently follows that either Christianity is true, and they knew it to be so; or that they were themselves deceivers and impostors, when they went forth proclaiming its doctrines to mankind. To one or the other of these conclusions we are inevitably brought, as a last resource, the only alternative by which we can at all account for their conduct. Now in order to ascertain which of the two is most probable,—whether the apostles and others of the first preachers of the gospel were upright and sincere men, and actuated by the conviction that Christianity was true, or whether they were a set of mere worthless impostors, there are two points in their history which demand our special attention, and which assuredly will, if they are properly and candidly considered, enable us to judge with a tolerable degree of accuracy on the subject. The first is, the extent to which they suffered

whilst endeavouring to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; and the second, the secret spring of their actions, so far as we can trace it, or, in other words, the motives by which they were influenced in their labours, and enabled steadily and patiently to submit to the diversified afflictions which befel them.

This is the pivot on which the whole of our enquiry now turns; it is the key-stone of the arch, the groundwork of our future investigation; and this point, if carefully examined, will certainly put us in possession of a body of evidence amply sufficient to remove all our unbelieving fears, and to shew us what is the real truth in the case in question. If it can be clearly shewn, that the sufferings and labours of the apostles were of an extraordinary character, that in these labours they had no secular object in view, but that the motives by which they were actuated were evidently unimpeachable, and free from the breath of this world's contamination; then the only remaining conclusion at which we can possibly arrive is, that they were honest and sincere men, and were actuated by a firm conviction that the religion which they proclaimed was divine. For these characteristic marks of their sincerity evidently prove that they viewed it in this light, and that circumstanced as they were, and ex-

amining it as they did, they could not possibly be deceived; consequently the evidence arising from these facts is of sufficient weight to justify us in our reception of the Bible as the exclusive revelation which God has given to guide men, as the subjects of his moral government, into the way of holiness, happiness, and eternal life.

SECTION 1.

A Succinct View of the Persecutions and Trials which the Apostles of Jesus Christ underwent, in their Endeavours to propagate the Christian Faith.

In the preceding introductory remarks, I have stated that the extent of the sufferings which the apostles underwent in the Christian cause is the first subject to which our enquiries ought to be directed. Having taken a short survey of these, we shall then, as the reader may perceive, be prepared to investigate their motives, and likewise be furnished with some data by which we may judge whether they were men of integrity, and worthy to be credited, or whether their profession of faith in Christ, and their efforts to propagate his religion, were a mere garb which they assumed with a view to cover some base and selfish design of a worldly character.

On the first of these subjects, the Acts of the Apostles will furnish us with a body of valuable and interesting information. From this book, which may be viewed as a journal of the principal events which befell the apostles, and others of the first promulgators of the Christian faith, at the outset of their career, we learn that no sooner had these philanthropic men, in obedience to their Master's commands, entered upon the great work to which he had designated them, than a heavy storm of painful and discouraging persecution overtook them. We find on reading the former part of the fourth chapter of this book, that almost on their first attempt to preach the gospel, they were seized, by officers appointed for the purpose, and carried before the Jewish Sanhedrim. It is also stated, chap. v. 40, that but a short period after this event had elapsed ere they were again called to appear before the same high tribunal; and on this second appearance, they were ordered to be beaten, and received a command from the court that they should no more speak to the people in the name of Jesus. A third summons shortly after overtook them; and they were once more compelled to present themselves at the bar of this iniquitous tribunal. The result of this their third appearance is recorded in Acts vi. vii. where we

are informed, that one of their number was on this occasion put to death in the most unjust and cruel manner. In the third verse of the following chapter we are told that Saul, who was a notorious persecutor, although he afterwards became a preacher of the faith he was then labouring to destroy, made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison. The 12th chapter of the same book states the death of James, who was killed by the sword, and the imprisonment of Peter, who would have met with the same fate, had he not been miraculously delivered. In the following chapters of the same inspired record, we have various detailed accounts of the sufferings, persecutions, and dangers, to which the apostle Paul was perpetually exposed; and the truth of those statements is abundantly confirmed by his own testimony, which we have in the numerous epistles which he addressed to the Asiatic and other churches.* It is however but a short account, with which the sacred oracles furnish us, of the sufferings of the apostles, and others of the first converts of Christianity. The principal information which we have on this sub-

* See 1 Cor. i. 4, 9, and 2 Cor. xi. 24; also chap. vi. 4, and following verses, which passages are quoted at length in the first volume, page 158.

ject, is derived from the works of various contemporary historians, who have written the history of those eventful ages, Josephus, Celsus, Tacitus, and Pliny, with several other writers who lived about this period, and were decidedly hostile to Christianity. They were not, as is frequently objected to Christian authors, of the prejudiced party. On the contrary, they wrote with a view to injure and impede the cause of the gospel, and not with a design to increase the weight of that impregnable body of satisfactory and convincing evidence by which it is supported. The testimony, therefore, of these men may be confidently relied on, as it cannot be supposed that they would write more favourably of a religion which they thoroughly despised, than they were compelled to do out of respect to their own characters as faithful and correct historians.

From the various sources of information furnished by these and other writers of that age, we learn that the majority of the first preachers of Christianity were put to death by its hostile and malicious enemies, in a most unnatural and cruel manner. The evangelist Mark, it is related, was dragged by a cord fastened to his feet through the streets of Alexandria, until life became extinct and his body mangled in the most inhuman manner;

Luke was hanged in Greece; James was slain by the sword at Jerusalem; Peter was crucified, and Paul, was beheaded at Rome; and Thomas, who, it is said, came to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of this country, was persecuted and slain by the bramhuns.* Neither were the sufferings and trials of which I have here been speaking confined to the apostles and other active propagators of Christianity. Every man who renounced the religion of his ancestors, and became a convert to the gospel, was liable to be thus treated in those days of injustice and cruelty. It was not in one place, neither for a short space of time, but in every country where the gospel made its way, and through a long series of years, that Christians underwent, in a thousand different forms, these inhuman and unheard of cruelties. In some places they were whipped until all the flesh was torn from their bodies; in others, they were dressed in skins of beasts, and mercilessly exposed in the theatres of popular amusement to be devoured by dogs, tigers, and other kinds of ferocious beasts. They were in some instances bound upon iron spikes, and compelled to remain in that painful position

* See a little work on the Evidences of the Christian Religion, entitled, "A Father's Gift to his Children," page 78.

until the lamp of life was extinguished. Some were roasted alive before slow fires; whilst others were dipped in pitch and oil, and fire being put to them were used as torches to illuminate public roads, gardens, and other places of general resort. In fact, so great were the sufferings and trials to which they were perpetually exposed, that the apostle has justly declared in reference to them, (1 Cor. xv. 19.) that if in this life only they had hope in Christ, they were of all men the most miserable.

Now we know that fire and sword, racks and tortures, in a word, death in all its most appalling and terrific forms, are not things to be trifled with. It is however sufficiently clear, that the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ experienced during a number of years a continued repetition of afflictions of this nature; they must therefore have had some object in view; there must have been some motive which sustained them, and that motive must have been one of no ordinary character thus to bear them up and enable them to remain stedfast under such a scene of accumulated trials. It is the height of absurdity to suppose that they would labour, and suffer, and submit to the loss of all things,—that they would at so much cost spend their whole lives on propagating the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, if they

knew it to be a fable, and the religion which it unfolds to be founded in deception and falsehood. The sufferings and trials which they underwent in this cause, forbid our entertaining such an idea for a moment ; and apart from the trials which fell to their lot in the present life, they could on this supposition expect nothing in the life which is to come, but indignation and wrath from the hands of an angry God as the just punishment of their fraud and dissimulation.

Numerous instances, it is true, have occurred, and are perpetually occurring in the world, which abundantly convince us that there is no lack of men who are adepts in hypocrisy and deception. We cannot, however, for a moment suppose, that the apostles and first promulgators of the Christian religion were men of this character, because it is evident (as will hereafter be seen) that they were not in any part of their undertaking, seeking their own personal aggrandizement, which is the sole object men of this order usually have in view. Now, if this can be clearly proved ; if it can be shewn that they were not influenced by any views of a secular nature, it then follows that the object that they had in view must have been solely of a spiritual character, and consequently that their motives were pure and unimpeachable.

And here we boldly assert, that that object was the glory of God, and the salvation of the souls of men ; and the accomplishment of this was the sole motive, which impelled them forward in their career of benevolent exertion ; and their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope, are of themselves, without any additional testimony, amply sufficient to prove it.

There are, however, several other circumstances, either stated or alluded to in the gospel history, connected with this subject, and which are calculated to place in a still more luminous point of view the integrity of the motives by which they were actuated in their evangelical labours. To these, therefore, the attention of the reader will be directed in the following Section ; and I request him here to bear in mind, that if this point can be satisfactorily proved, and it can be shown that the apostles were upright and sincere men, it then follows that the truth of the Christian religion and of the Christian Scriptures, being involved as they both are in the great question of their integrity, are at once proved and demonstrated beyond all reasonable possibility of a doubt. What I mean to say is, that they both stand upon the same foundation ; the evidence therefore which proves the one, proves the

other also; whatever tends to prove the sincerity of the apostles tends in an equal degree to substantiate the truth of the Christian Scriptures, and to confirm us in our faith that the religion which these scriptures reveal is a religion which has come from God.

SECTION 2.

Examination of the Motives by which the Apostles were actuated, in their Endeavours to promote the Spread of the Gospel.

I have in the foregoing Section explicitly stated that the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were not actuated by selfish designs, but by motives of a pure and holy character, in their endeavours to advance the interests of that religion with which they were entrusted. Mere assertion, however, on any subject, without proof, is of very little worth. I shall therefore proceed, agreeably to the intimation there given, to direct the reader's attention to the various evidences with which the New Testament history furnishes us in support of our position: this being, as I have already stated, the only point (so far as the argument of this chapter is concerned) which remains to be established, in order to prove the divine authenticity of the apostles' writings, and the truth of the religion which they set forth.

If we can clear our cause from all^t doubts on this head, our triumph is complete ; because in doing this, we conceive that we establish a position by which we are morally compelled, on the ground of all rational and testimonial evidence, to admit the truth of what these writers have asserted, and to receive the Bible on the testimony with which they have furnished us, as a book that is given by inspiration of God, and which is able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.)

On this part of our subject we begin by remarking, that as rational men, men of consideration and reflection, which the disciples of the Lord Jesus undoubtedly were, mercenary motives or hopes of temporal gain, could not possibly enter into their scheme ; because the Redeemer himself had from the beginning taught them to expect the very reverse. On becoming his disciples, they were required to take up their cross ; and were told that if need be, they must forsake father, and mother, and wife, and brethren, and sisters, rather than forego their attachment to his cause. He commanded them not to lay up for themselves treasure upon earth, but to prepare for persecutions, and to expect that their names would be cast out by men as evil ; and ever to be ready

even to lay down their lives for his sake. And if the reader will carefully peruse the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of the New Testament, which contain the earliest records of the Christian Church, he will at once perceive that they had not been unnecessarily forewarned to prepare for trials and conflicts in their Christian career. The various troubles which they experienced, after their Master's ascension to glory, and to which I have sufficiently referred in the foregoing section, experimentally taught them the truth of what he had previously communicated to them on this subject ; and are sufficient to convince us, in whatever light we view their characters, that as men with their eyes open, they could in no possible way be influenced by even the shadow of a hope, that any secular advantage or temporal gain would accrue to them, from the enterprise in which they were embarked.

Another circumstance, likewise, which proves that they not only clearly understood, but also fully believed all that the Redeemer had made known to them, respecting the trials which would ultimately befall them, is the fact, that when they went forth as preachers of the Christian faith, in obedience to the commission which he had given them, they uniformly acted upon the self-denying principles in which

they had been instructed, and taught their converts to act upon them likewise. Instead of holding out any prospects of temporal advantage to the persons whom they endeavoured to proselyte, they taught them precisely the same doctrines which they had themselves received from their Master on this subject. So far from flattering or deceiving them, or in any way attempting to excite false hopes, they openly and unequivocally declared to them, that persecution awaited all who were determined to live godly in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. iii. 12; they forewarned their converts to expect tribulation in the world, 1 Thess. iii. 4, assuring them that as the Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings, so they also through much tribulation must enter the kingdom. Acts xiv. 22.

Now these passages not only furnish us with a view of their conduct, but they likewise give us an insight into their motives; and it is evident from the proofs deducible from this source, and also from the whole tenor of their lives, that they could not possibly be influenced by sinister views. The doctrine of self-denial and sacrifice was the doctrine which they themselves uniformly received from their Lord, and which, with a corresponding degree of faithfulness, they as constantly taught to others.

It is moreover equally absurd to suppose, that pride or ambition influenced them in their undertaking, or in any way formed a part of their projects. The honour which cometh from man was amongst the things which by the same high authority they were invariably forbidden to seek; and, instead of their names being enrolled amongst the great and the noble of the earth, we find from the whole tenor of their history, that they met with the most sovereign contempt; that they were uniformly looked upon by the men of the world with scorn and indignation, and were every where treated as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things. 1 Cor. iv. 13.

And whilst it is certain that these holy men were not, in their career of Christian philanthropy, influenced by either ambition or covetousness, it is also equally clear, that they were men of good natural powers, though devoid of what is commonly called a liberal education; that is, they were not weak, credulous men,—men easily imposed upon, incapable of appreciating evidence, or distinguishing between fact and fiction. The character of their writings, and the whole history of their proceedings, their caution in receiving the testimony of others, especially, as I have before stated, in the case of the Redeemer's resurrec-

tion, proves that they were possessed of prudence and discretion, and were in no danger of having their judgement perverted, or their feelings led astray, by the delusions of a fanatical imagination.

The question, therefore, which in the face of these facts presents itself to our view, is as follows: By what motives could these zealous labourers in this despised cause possibly be influenced? What was the secret impetus which induced them thus voluntarily to submit to defamation, to suffer the loss of all things, and patiently to undergo a series of sufferings unparalleled in the annals of history? If we call upon them to speak for themselves, we shall find that they tell us a plain, simple and unvarnished story—a story which is attested by so many circumstantial and characteristic marks of truth, that we are almost irresistibly constrained to believe it. Instead of being influenced by sinister motives, we learn from their simple testimony, that secular aggrandizement formed no part of their scheme. They tell us, and that in the most positive terms, that it was the hope of immortality which the gospel exhibits, and a full conviction of the truth of that gospel, which enabled them in the spirit of holy resignation to submit to the loss of all that was dear to them on earth, to

renounce the religion in which they had been educated, and voluntarily to undergo all the unparalleled sufferings and trials which I have before described in order to propagate it. They had, according to their own testimony, tasted of the good word of life, (Heb. vi. 5,) and being renewed in the spirit of their minds, (Eph. iv. 23,) were convinced that the gospel was the power of God unto salvation, (Rom. i. 16.) They saw that the world was lying in wickedness, (1 John v. 19,) and were convinced that the eternal ruin of its votaries was inevitable if they continued in their unbelief. They knew likewise that their happiness was connected with, or rather that it was entirely dependent upon their reception of the doctrines which they preached. They had moreover, as they assert, a commission from God to publish, declare, and make known, these doctrines to the world. Influenced therefore by a sense of duty towards God on the one hand, and by a feeling of tender compassion for the souls of men on the other, they patiently submitted to the reproach of the cross, and were willing to be accounted fools for Christ's sake. (1 Cor. iv. 10.) These they unequivocally avow were the *exalted* principles which supported them in necessities, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,

(2 Cor. vi. 4, 5,)—which made them take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, (Heb. x. 34,)—which enabled them to remain stedfast and unmoved in the midst of all the afflictions that befel them, not counting their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. .
Acts xx. 23, 24.

This, as the reader may perceive, if he peruses the Epistles of the New Testament, is a correct view of the testimony with which these holy men have furnished us, as to the principles by which they were actuated, in the extraordinary line of conduct they pursued. I am quite aware, that all this may be objected to as an *ex parte* statement. This however is nothing to the purpose, if it can be shewn from satisfactory evidence to be a true one. And in addition to the various proofs which I have already brought forward in support of, their sincerity, there is still one remaining which ought not to be overlooked, viz. That apart from the extent of their labours, and the magnitude of their sufferings in defence of the Christian religion, their own characters were formed upon the doctrines and precepts which that

holy religion inculcates, and upon the evident supposition that it had the sanction of the Divine Being. And it is to the influence of the precepts and doctrines of this religion that the high standard of moral excellence to which they ultimately attained, and which I have particularly enlarged upon in a former part of this work, is to be attributed.

Under the influence of these principles and this conviction, they not only laboured and suffered, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection, but they likewise renounced their old customs and habits, shook off their former prejudices, submitted to new rules of conduct, and, withdrawing themselves from every sinful indulgence, were characterised in all their deportment, and throughout the whole of their future lives by humility, meekness and love. In the continual exhibition of all these graces, they shone as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, Phil. ii. 15 ; and holding fast the word of life they became living epistles read and known of all men. 2 Cor. iii. 2.

Now if the reader will bear in mind this great moral change which was produced upon the first champions of the Christian faith : if in addition to this he will also bear in mind the fact, that in all their proceedings they evident-

ly went upon the assumption that Christianity was true: if he will moreover view these circumstances in connection with all the other proofs which I have heretofore brought forward on this subject; he will, I think, hardly be able, however warped his mind may be by prejudice, to resist the secret conviction, that the apostles and others of the first preachers of the gospel were evidently sincere and upright men, and that they were solely influenced in their labours by the principles which I have before stated,—a desire to glorify God, and save the souls of their fellow-creatures. For my own part, I must confess, that the persecutions, privations, and trials which they perpetually underwent in their noble and disinterested career of mercy and benevolence, are in my own view of the case, a satisfactory and convincing proof both of the integrity of their characters as men, and the sincerity of their motives as ministers, a proof both of the veracity of their testimony as witnesses to the broad facts of the Redeemer's life, and the authenticity of their narratives as historians of the several events which they have detailed, as connected with the rise and progress of his religion in the world.

Perhaps the reader, however, may not entirely agree with me here; he may hesitate in

coming at once to this decisive conclusion. If this should be the case, I may then present the subject to him in another form. I may at least ask him, after having listened, as he now has done, to the statements of the apostles, examined their characters, and enquired into their motives, what appears to him, taking all circumstances into consideration, to be the probabilities of the case, or on which side the evidences of truth seem chiefly to preponderate. If any doubt should yet remain on his mind, the best way to remove it is to do as a jury in a court of justice would do, who, after having heard the witnesses on both sides, would sum up the evidence and then form their judgment accordingly. And I am persuaded that I cannot recommend a better plan than this to the reader, who is seriously enquiring after divine truth, nor one which is better calculated to enable him to form a correct conclusion, both as to the true state of the case in question, and also as to the amount of evidence to be derived from this source in favour of the divine authority of the Christian Scriptures.

In order to aid him in pursuing this enquiry, I will here remind him of the second illustration given at the 12th page of the first volume of this work, and which I have there laid down

as involving one of the fundamental principles on which our investigation was primarily proposed to be conducted. It is there said, that if a letter were presented to us professing to have come from some great personage at a distance, we might, if we were not personally acquainted with its professed author, and had any doubts as to its authenticity, proceed to investigate it in the following way: we might institute an enquiry as to the character of the persons from whose hands we received it, we might sit in judgment upon their credibility, and the evidences which came before us of their honesty and sincerity; and from the apparent marks of fraud on the one hand, or of integrity on the other, which we found to be associated with their general character and conduct, we might form a tolerably correct conclusion as to the probable truth and authenticity of the message which they were the instruments of conveying to us.

Now the reader will, I apprehend, be at no loss to perceive how this illustration applies to the subject in hand. The New Testament is the letter here supposed, and the apostles of Jesus Christ are the bearers of it; and I do not hesitate to say, that according to the principles of this illustration, the only rational conclusion at which we can possibly arrive as to what

they have asserted respecting its divine authority, is, that it is true. For whilst there is on the one hand no justifiable ground on which we can reject their testimony, there is on the other the most satisfactory evidence that can reasonably be required in confirmation and support of it. They have about them all the air and mien, and characteristic traits of honest, sincere, and upright men. They tell us that they had the authority of the Deity for acting as they did ; and we are compelled to admit the truth of their assertion as the only rational explication that can possibly be given of their conduct. These holy and philanthropic men could not possibly be labouring under a delusion as to the divine origin of Christianity. The circumstances in which they were placed utterly prevented it. It was no hearsay story which they propagated, but that which had come under their own immediate observation. They were eye-witnesses of the facts they record. It was not that which they had heard from others, but that which they had seen with their own eyes, which they had heard with their own ears. Let the objector therefore turn whichever way he will, it will be impossible for him to find any ground on which to suspect the veracity of the apostles, or doubt the truth of their testimony. If this conclusion

is admitted as just and correct, there is then no flaw whatever. The mystery which otherwise hangs over their conduct is immediately removed ; and the motives which induced them to labour, and by which they were supported through such a series of trials, are on this principle evident and clear; and the difficulties which they patiently underwent rationally accounted for; and the reader who rejects this inference is called upon to give a more reasonable account of their conduct, and to shew if he can on more rational principles what were the real motives by which they were actuated in their work of faith, their labour of love, and patience of hope, 1 Thess. i. 3. If however he would divest his mind of prejudice, and instead of contradicting all the principles of right reasoning, act in conformity to them, he must of necessity admit the propriety of this conclusion; and as an unavoidable consequence be compelled to acknowledge that Christianity is true,—that the apostles of Christ knew it to be so,—and therefore feeling as they did its importance, both to themselves and others, they relied on and were upheld by the arm of omnipotence in their endeavours to preach it; and although it happened, through the wickedness and malice of their opposers, that they were in deaths oft, 2 Cor. xi. 23, yet

being supported and protected by him who commanded them to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature, **Mark** xvi. 15, they still courageously went on, fighting the good fight of faith, **1 Tim.** vi. 12, and endured as seeing him who is invisible. **Heb.** xi. 27.

SECTION 3.

On the Conduct and Motives of those who suffer according to the Rites of the Hindoo Religion.

It is more than probable, that the arguments advanced in the two preceding Sections may be objected to by some of the readers of this work, as being of little or no weight in support of the truth of Christianity, because other systems of religion which are undoubtedly false, if they have not precisely the same, have nevertheless a considerable degree of evidence of a similar character. Hindooism, it may be observed, can boast of its martyrs in the multitudes of women who, according to its prescribed ceremonies, have sacrificed themselves on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands. In answer to this objection, I reply, that the painful and undeniable fact, that Hindoo women have frequently and voluntarily destroyed themselves in conformity to

the rules laid down in the Shastrus, neither advances the cause of the religion which these Shastrus inculcate, nor yet detracts from the satisfactory nature of the evidence which arises from the sufferings of the Christian martyrs in the defence and support of the gospel. The voluntary sacrifice of life which so many of these victims of delusion have (till within the last four or five years) so frequently made will bear no comparison with those noble and more generous sacrifices which the apostles and first converts to Christianity made, rather than deny the Lord Jesus Christ, or disobey the command which he gave them to preach the gospel to every creature.

The Hindoo women who heretofore were accustomed to immolate themselves, did not act from a conviction arising either from personal observation or accredited testimony, that the act which they performed was in accordance with the will of God. The deed was extolled and applauded, and being deluded, as they undoubtedly were, by various statements of merit which were represented to arise from this wicked sacrifice of life, they were thereby induced to submit to it. The probable truth however is, that the generality of them did it, in order to avoid the misery and disgrace to which they were conscious they would be ex-

posed in future life, from the cruel treatment of their hard hearted relatives and friends. With the Christian martyrs, however, the case was quite the reverse. They were not encouraged and excited to throw away their lives, but were repeatedly tempted and allured to renounce the religion of the gospel in order to save them, and if they had complied with these temptations, that is, had they renounced Christianity, they might in most instances have escaped the painful deaths I have described, have saved their property and possessions, and continued in the quiet enjoyment of their freedom, reputation and friends.

The immolation of the Hindoo women was in general a hasty transaction, a desperate step which they took when they were under the influence of either grief, or passion, or despair, or some other feeling of a similar character by which they were overcome, and being for the time almost deprived of the faculty of reason. But the Christian martyrs were not under the influence of any feelings of this kind at the time they suffered. Their martyrdom was seldom a sudden or hasty occurrence; in most instances a sufficient period was given them duly to consider the sufferings to which they were about to expose themselves; and they had only to renounce Christianity, and to return to the

religious system which they had forsaken, to avoid the cruel and ignominious tortures which such multitudes of them perpetually endured.

These Hindoo women, moreover, received no education, but were kept in a state of total ignorance on every subject. Their conduct, therefore, in thus immolating themselves was only like that of a blind man, who in consequence of his inability to discover the destruction that awaits him, rushes headlong down a precipice merely because he is bidden to do so, and dashes himself to pieces. But this was not the case with the suffering Christians of whom I have previously spoken. Submission to martyrdom was no blind step, which they ignorantly or inadvertently took. Multitudes of them were men who possessed a sound mind, a correct judgment, and an extensive knowledge of the world. They saw, and knew, and understood what they were doing : they were capable of examining the evidences, and appreciating the claims of Christianity, and to this examination (to which all men to whom the gospel is proposed are invited,) they duly and diligently attended. By thus investigating the Scriptures for themselves, they were fully convinced of their divine authority; and it was on the ground of this conviction that they acted, when, in obedience to the Saviour's com-

mand, (Mark viii. 34,) they denied themselves, and took up their cross, and followed him. To forsake father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and their own lives likewise, (Luke xiv. 26,) they undoubtedly felt to be a trial of no ordinary nature ; but they knew, whilst making these sacrifices, and submitting to these trials, that their afflictions, which comparatively were light, and but for a moment, would work out for them a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Again—These Hindoo women, if they can with any degree of propriety be called martyrs, were only martyrs to sentiment and opinion : they were taught from their *infancy*, that to sacrifice their lives according to this cruel rite of the *Shastrus* was highly meritorious—that it was an act well pleasing to God, and would inevitably secure to them a more than ordinary degree of happiness in a future world : but they were utterly incapable of judging for themselves as to the truth or falsehood of this statement, in consequence of which they were very liable, as all men are, when guided by others, or only acting under the influence of mere sentiment or opinion, to be deceived. The Christian martyrs, however, instead of being martyrs to sentiment, were martyrs to

facts, they died not to attest that which they had been taught, or merely supposed to be true ; but they died to attest the truth of that which they had seen with their eyes, which they had looked upon, and which their hands had handled of the word of life. (1 John i. 1.) Whilst, therefore, deception and falsehood were in the former case easy to be practised, they were totally excluded from the latter. Men may easily be mistaken as to what they have been taught, or what they have heard ; but they cannot be mistaken as to what they have repeatedly seen and done ; and which, by coming under their immediate observation, has been the subject of their own personal experience. According to this principle, therefore, no evidence for the support of the Hindoo religion is derived from the conduct of the sufferers who have thrown away their lives as an act of obedience to the precepts which it inculcates : but the conduct of those who have bled and died in defence of the gospel, arising as it did from principles and motives of a nature totally different from that which actuated the victims of Hindoo immolation, may ever be appealed to as a strong auxiliary evidence in support of its truth. The former religion, therefore, instead of gaining any thing by an examination on this subject, re-

mains just where it was ; whilst the evidences of the truth of the latter rise in proportion to the diligence with which they are investigated. By examination, the truth of its claims will more conspicuously appear ; and triumphing, as it always does over every objection, it will leave the mind of the sincere and diligent enquirer, without the least shadow of a doubt as to the certainty and truth of its divine original.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

OF THE EVIDENCE WHICH IS DERIVED FROM
THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL ON ITS FIRST
PUBLICATION.

The argument which is derived from the spread of the gospel in favour of the divine authenticity of Christianity, may be illustrated by the following simile:—Suppose a tree, in a healthy state and full of sap, is planted in a rich luxuriant soil, watered well and duly attended to, it will excite no surprise in our minds if we see that tree flourish, teem with fruit, and spread its foliage all around. But suppose a dry sapless stock, that is evidently quite dead, is put into the ground; if this stock should take root, and assume the appearance of life, if it should blossom, and bud, and bring forth fruit, our astonishment will then be excited, and justly so, because such a circumstance is contrary to the established order of nature; and the conclusion at which we shall arrive, on beholding it is, that a divine and supernatural power has certainly interposed, or such an effect could not possibly have

been produced. Now the application of this simile to the Christian religion is as follows. This religion at the outset of its career was not favoured with any adventitious circumstances whatever. If it had, we should not have been surprised on beholding it, like the tree to which I have referred, flourishing and bringing forth an abundance of fruit. Instead, however, of its being compared to such a flourishing tree as this, it might, (as to its external circumstances,) with much more propriety be compared, at the time the Redeemer sent forth his disciples to proclaim its doctrines to the world, to the dry sapless trunk I have just now described ; that is, it is so opposed in its nature and genius to all the systems of religion which then existed among the nations; it met with so much hostility from all classes of society ; and the instruments employed to disseminate it, were in the estimation of men so ill qualified for their work, that there was, as to outward appearance, no more probability of its obtaining a footing in the world, than there is a probability that such a dry sapless trunk should, in the ordinary course of nature, revive, and bloom, and exhibit the appearance of youthful verdure : and yet, notwithstanding these gloomy appearances, so signal was the success which it met

with on its first publication, that it took root and grew in every part of the world where it was made known. Its spread and triumph, therefore, under such circumstances (on which subject I shall treat in the next Section) evidently proves that its success can only be attributed to the interposition of a divine agency; and the fact of such an agency having interposed to accelerate its interests, clearly proves that it has the sanction of a divine authority, in as much as the Deity would certainly never interpose and bear his testimony to a religion of which he was not himself the author. The apostles and first preachers of Christianity, situated as they were, could have accomplished nothing in their own strength; their success therefore in their work evidently proves, that he who framed the world, and he who interposed to give them that success, must be the same,—evidently proves, that he who framed the universe, and he who inspired the Scriptures in which that religion is revealed, must be one, the living, and the true God.

SECTION 1.

Of the Extraordinary Spread of the Gospel at the Commencement of the Christian Era.

At the period of the Redeemer's incarnation, every nation upon the face of the earth, the

Jews excepted, was (as to objects of a spiritual character,) immersed in the grossest darkness, superstition and idolatry. The religion which he came to establish, is in its entire nature opposed to all the depraved feelings of the human heart. In addition to this, it was also at variance with all the systems of religion which then prevailed amongst the nations. It was opposed to the whole of them in spirit, and so far from coalescing with any, its original founder, and also its first champions, openly avowed, that nothing less than their total and entire subversion, was one great end for which it was promulgated in the world. With a view therefore to accomplish this object, and also to deliver the myriads of the human race from that degrading thraldom in which from time immemorial they had been held, in consequence of their adherence to these delusive systems, Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to go forth in his name, and publish salvation through every land. He commanded them to point out to the advocates of these systems their falsehood, to invite them to forsake them, and to believe in him as the only Saviour from the wrath to come. In obedience to his command they went forth, and through their zealous and persevering labours, accompanied by his blessing, the ancient systems

of idolatry and superstition were speedily undermined, heathen temples were deserted, Christian churches rose in their places, and the gospel triumphed throughout the whole of the western world. “The doctrines of Christianity were at length made a part and parcel of Roman law, and the Imperial Eagles which had fought with the world, and fought only to conquer, were seen cowering before the more splendid, yet bloodless victories of the cross.”

In surveying the triumphs which this holy religion achieved in the early stages of its existence, there are two things which ought particularly to be borne in mind, viz. the agents by whom that mighty work was effected, and the number and magnitude of the obstacles, by which its progress was from time to time arrested. I specify these because the extensive and rapid spread of a religion abstractedly considered, can no more be viewed as a proof of its having a divine origin than the system of law established at Rome can be considered divine, because it once prevailed over all the civilized world, or the Code Napoleon, because it has been adopted by several of the most intelligent nations of Europe.

In advocating, therefore, the divinity of Christianity by arguments adduced from this source, the point or force of the argument is

derived, as the reader will no doubt perceive, from a variety of attendant and collateral circumstances, that is, it is derived from the nature of Christianity itself, and the peculiar situation in which it was originally placed ; from the impediments which it had to surmount, and the fact, that it not only did surmount them, but that it has from that period down to the present day maintained an empire in the world ; and it is the consideration of these attendant and collateral circumstances, as an excellent writer has well observed, that must lead us to determine whether the fact of its success is worthy to be considered as an evidence at all ; and if so, in what degree, whether as an evidence of a secondary nature, or of the first magnitude.

On the first of the two subjects here referred to, that is, the instruments by which the gospel was originally propagated, I beg to observe that the Lord Jesus Christ, who was himself the first preacher and the original founder of the New Testament dispensation, possessed no temporal power ; he had no secular advantages, no worldly influence, to support his claims to a divine commission, or accelerate the interests of that religion which he came to establish, and which he commanded to be preached amongst all nations. Luke xxiv. 47.

He held, moreover, no exalted rank in civil society ; he was the supposed son of a carpenter, occupying a humble and obscure situation in common life ; he lived in poverty, died in disgrace, and was, as to his humanity and the trials through which he passed, emphatically “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Isa. liii. 3. If we read the history of his life, with which the four evangelists have furnished us, we shall find that he was despised by the people, rejected by the rulers, opposed by the priests, and had to depend for success entirely upon the truth, the justice, and the merits of his cause, in opposition to all that pride, and prejudice, and malice could possibly bring against it.

The agents whom he employed to carry on the work, and forward the interests of his kingdom after his ascension to glory, were, as to outward circumstances, in every respect equally disadvantageously situated. Instead of selecting the men whom he appointed to the office of the Christian ministry from amongst the learned, the noble, and the great, he selected them from the common ranks of society. The principal agents he employed were the twelve apostles, and they were tent-makers, fishermen and tax gatherers ; they were poor, of humble origin, and so uninformed, that it was not un-

til they had been some time under the instruction of their teacher, that they were brought to comprehend his professed character, and the great object of his mission ; they were, moreover, not only without the aids which are derived from power, wealth, and letters, but they likewise put no value upon these things as auxiliaries to them in their work ; on the contrary they even went so far as to denounce them “the fascinations of rhetoric, the riches of the wealthy, the wisdom of this world ;” and, connected with these particulars, they were moreover Jews, whilst their message was meant principally for the Gentiles who despised and abhorred them ; and to render their enterprise, if possible, still more difficult, their pretensions were to be tried, not by barbarians, but by Greece and Rome, which for superior intelligence were then denominated the eyes of the world. No man, therefore, in his senses can possibly suppose for a moment, that the triumphs of Christianity were effected through the energy, or the suitability of the instruments employed to propagate it : to suppose this, is to suppose that weakness may overcome strength, that simplicity is superior to science, or that there is no necessary and dependant connection between an effect and its originating cause.

The position, therefore, in which we entrench

ourselves, and which we are fully prepared to maintain, is, that the extraordinary success which attended the heralds of the Redeemer's mercy to our guilty world, can on no ground whatever be attributed to any particular qualifications which they naturally possessed for their work, neither can it be attributed to any previous combination of auspicious circumstances ; —no, the reason of their success must be sought for from a source independent of, and higher than all these ; for the plain fact is, that instead of meeting with any thing fortuitous in their career, and adapted to further the object of their wishes and their hopes, the whole face of external circumstances was entirely against them, and judging according to the common course of events, nothing on earth could possibly appear more absurd, than the idea that such instruments as these—men so destitute of all external advantages, so void of erudition, and so low in the scale of civil society, should meet with the least measure of success in their undertaking.

In addition to the character of the instruments employed in propagating this religion, the number and variety of the obstacles by which its progress was from time to time arrested, likewise demand our notice. To these, therefore, as proposed in the second place, I

shall now direct the reader's attention: and in order that he may be enabled fully to estimate them, I must request him to bear in mind what has before been said respecting its peculiar character and genius, viz. that it is in every respect diametrically opposed, (and will ever continue to be opposed,) to all the natural feelings of the depraved heart of man. It was, moreover, at variance with all the established systems of religion which then existed in the world, and refused to coalesce with any of them. For these, therefore, and other reasons, it was on its first annunciation virulently attacked by an intolerant and persecuting government, a prejudiced people, and an interested priesthood. It was in fact to be expected that a new religion like this, a religion so strange in its nature, and admitting of no community of interest with any other that previously existed, would be strongly opposed. "Accordingly all previous history supplies us with no resemblance to the severity and extent of the persecutions by which Christianity was assailed; none had an interest in helping it, all had an interest in its suppression. The philosopher was opposed to it; he could not endure a religion which declared the wisdom of the world to be foolishness with God, which brought him down to a level with the igno-

rant and the poor, and commanded him to become a fool that he might be wise. The priest of every false religion was opposed to it; his religion was constructed for worldly purposes; his reputation therefore with the people, the gains of his vocation, and the preservation of his very official existence, made him an enemy at every point. The magistrate was opposed to it; because instead of asking leave of the state 'to be,' it claimed the right to stand alone. The people were opposed to it; they were devoted to a religion composed of external rights and plenary indulgences, which gave them gods frail like themselves, and which delighted them by the magnificence of its shews, the beauty of its statues, and the grandeur of its temples; upon that religion, therefore, which had none of these attractions, they looked down with unspeakable contempt and hatred, and they even went so far as to pronounce its followers to be atheists, because they could not conceive of a God who was not to be seen, nor of worship without a temple, nor of piety without ceremonies." This feeling of hostility displayed itself in the very infancy of the gospel dispensation; hence we find from the evangelical history, that the great Redeemer had no sooner appeared in public, professing to be divinely commissioned to reveal

the will of heaven, and found a kingdom which was not of this world, than a conspiracy was forthwith formed by the Jewish people to crush him and his sect, and to take away his life. He was betrayed, and condemned, and crucified, and the fire of persecution which had been originally kindled for the master, was, after his resurrection, preserved to consume the servants. When the disciples of the Son of God attempted to execute their commission by preaching, in obedience to his commands, the doctrines of his holy religion, the breath of calumny on the one hand, and the arm of secular power on the other, were both immediately called forth and set in array against them. “They were compelled to flee from city to city, and from province to province; the Jews accusing them to the Romans, and the Romans delivering them over to the Jews. Every where, and by every one, they were spoken against, calumniated, and vilified. Whatever crimes were committed, they and their followers had done them—whatever disturbances arose, they had fomented them—whatever judgments came from heaven, whether famine, pestilence, or war, they had procured them.”

In addition to these calumnies, which were so liberally heaped upon the first preachers of the gospel, they were also, as I have before in-

timated,* opposed in every step of their career by all the brutal force which their enemies could possibly bring into the field. No sooner had they commenced their labour of love than they had to contend with a world in arms. The hostile bands of Satan immediately marched to arrest their progress. The “powers that be” joined in the confederacy. Pride, and rage, and malice, raised their brazen fronts, and the raging storm of persecution threatened at once to crush the rising interests of the infant church. This spirit of persecution was not of an effervescent nature, not like the early cloud, and the morning dew, which soon pass away; but it continued through a long series of years, and prevailed more or less in every country where the gospel found an entrance.

Now, under these circumstances, considering the feebleness of the instruments employed in this work, and the amount of opposition which they had to encounter, what, we may ask, might have been rationally expected, as to the probability of their succeeding in the cause to which they had thus devoted themselves. “Conceive for a moment of a religion, the founder of which was so unsuccessful

* See section first of the preceding chapter, on the sufferings and conduct of the apostles.

in his attempts as to be executed as a malefactor, before he had fulfilled three years of his assumed mission. Conceive of its being taken up after his death by a handful of mechanics, and fishermen ; poor, illiterate, despised, and feeble. Conceive again of their going forth with no other weapons, except arguments and facts, persuasions, intreaties, and tears ; and with these contending against the might of greatness, and the customs of ages, the craft of cabinets, and the edict of monarchs. Conceive, moreover, of the government against which they had to contend, as being the most formidable the world ever saw, from its despotic character and almost universal empire. Conceive of them, likewise, as being equally opposed by the ignorance, the prejudices, the superstitions, and the interests both of the priests and the people. Conceive finally of the disciples of this profession offering no resistance, combining for no self-defence, but enduring the severest persecutions with pliancy and submission, until they perished by their adversaries ; and then let it be said whether, 'humanly speaking, it was not madness to expect that such means employed to spread a religion in the face of so much opposition should ever succeed.' But, when we pass on from enquiring what, in such circumstances, might have been rationally expected, to ask what was

the actual result, we find to our astonishment that, instead of disgrace, disappointment, and ruin attending them, their labours were everywhere crowned with the most complete and entire success. All the mighty impediments brought forth against the religion they proclaimed were insufficient to put it down; at each successive step it continued to gain new accessions of strength, to prosper and increase, notwithstanding the determined opposition, and vigorous endeavours of its most potent foes to check its career. Every effort which they made to arrest its progress proved futile and vain; still it went on and increased, bidding defiance to them all, until it filled the world with fruit. Hostility, power, and pride, no longer able to maintain their standing, at length fell vanquished at its feet. Its enemies, covered with disgrace and confusion, retired ashamed and confounded from the contest. The unnerved arm of opposition shrunk from a renewal of the encounter; and, its foes being all subdued by the power and force of its truths, it was forthwith left in quiet possession of the field, filled with the spoils of victory, and extending universal peace and holiness, as the fruit of the triumphs it had won. "A revolution," says Mr. James, in his splendid sermon on the Attraction of the Cross, "more ex-

traordinary than history records, or imagination could have conceived, was every where effected; and this by what was derided by the men who gave laws to the opinions of the world 'as the foolishness of preaching.' The powers of paganism, beheld the worshippers of the gods drawn away from their shrines by an influence which they could neither understand nor resist. Not the authority of the Olympian Jove, nor the seductive rites of the Paphian goddess, could any longer retain the homage of their former votaries. The exquisite beauty of their temples and their statues, with all those fascinations which their mythology was calculated to exert upon a people of refined taste and vicious habits, became the objects not only of indifference but of abhorrence; and millions by whom the cross must have been contemplated with mental revulsion as a matter of taste, embraced it with ex-tacy as the means of salvation. The idolatrous rites were deserted, the altars overturned, the deities left in solitude to sympathise with each other in dumb consternation, the lying voice of the oracle was hushed, the deceptive light of philosophy was extinguished, Satan fell like lightning from heaven, while the ministers of light rose with the number, the order, and the brilliancy of the stars. Resis-

tance only promoted the cause it intended to oppose, and persecution, like the wind of heaven blowing upon a conflagration, served only to spread the flame. In vain did the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed. The imperial eagle, collecting all her strength, and rousing all her fury, attacked the Lamb of God, till she too, subdued and captivated by the cross, cowered beneath its emblem, as it floated from the towers of the capitol; and Christianity, with the purple waving from her shoulders, and the diadem sparkling upon her brow, was proclaimed to be the truth of God, and the Empress of the world, on that very throne of the Cæsars where she had been so often arraigned as a criminal, and condemned as an imposter."

It is not, however, the simple fact of Christianity having triumphed, and triumphed too in the face of the appalling opposition here described, which alone demands our attention. The extent of country over which it spread, and the comparatively short space of time in which most of these triumphs were achieved, are also worthy of our notice. At Jerusalem, the very first day after the Redeemer's resurrection on which its doctrines were proclaimed, three thousand persons, that is, nearly as many as

heard the gospel were constrained to embrace it, and this amount was quickly increased to five thousand, who were afterwards associated together as a Christian church. From Jerusalem the Christian doctrine spread throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. Saul of Tarsus then carries it with equal success from the Jewish land to the heathen world. The gospel is preached at Antioch, at Derbe, at Iconium ; at Macedonia, at Corinth, and at Ephesus ; at Alexandria, at Athens, and at Rome ; and the result of these extended ministrations is given in such incidental expressions as the following, “the disciples multiplied greatly—a great number believed and turned unto the Lord—a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed—the churches increased in numbers daily—the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”

Such is the history of the extended and rapid success, as it is detailed in the inspired volume, which Christianity met with in the early stages of its career. Ecclesiastical history, however, enters more largely into the subject, and furnishes us with a more circumstantial account of its early triumphs. “It appears,” says Dr. Doddridge, “from the most credible records, that the gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by Jude;

in Egypt, Marmorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude ; in Ethiopia by Candace's eunuch and Matthias ; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter ; in the territories of the seven churches, by John ; in Parthia, by Matthew ; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew ; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew ; in Persia, by Simon and Jude ; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas ; through the vast tract from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul—as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain ; and in most of these places Christian churches were planted in less than thirty years after the death of Jesus Christ, and before the destruction of Jerusalem.” Neither did it stop here; still as years rolled on, it continued to wing its triumphant way, and penetrate regions yet more and more remote. “ It succeeded equally with the civilized and the barbarian, the bond and the free, and prevailed over districts and realms inaccessible to the laws and legions of Rome ; it won its way into the court, and the forum, and the temple ; and men the most opposite in rank, in temper, and in opinion, were alike subjected to its power.”

We have now, I think, sufficiently establish-

ed our position, so far as the first two points of our enquiry are concerned. We have shown that the gospel triumphed by means of a weak, and apparently inefficient, instrumentality; and that it triumphed in the face of the most appalling opposition. The question, then, which now presents itself to view is as follows: To what power, or to what influence, are these unprecedented triumphs to be attributed? If the whole of what we have now stated was accomplished by mere natural causes, we are then free to confess that it affords no evidence of its divine authority; but if natural causes were altogether inadequate to produce such results, it follows that it must have been effected by the interposition of a supernatural agency; and the fact of such an agency having interposed on its behalf, is a clear and sufficient attestation to its divine origin. As to the first of these suppositions, that it was accomplished by mere natural causes, we may observe, that, if it is duly reflected on, it is too absurd to be maintained for a moment. It is trifling, and worse than trifling, to say, as some persons have pretended to do, that the whole of what I have now described was the result of the apostles' zealous, laborious, and continued proselyting exertions; as we clearly see, in the ordinary course of events, that no

such results attend the labours of God's most faithful and devoted servants. The effect which I have here stated was far too great to be attributed solely to such a cause,—a cause so weak, so feeble, and so inefficient. It is a universally acknowledged principle, that a corresponding connection must ever exist between cause and effect; and this statement will be found correct when applied to the moral, as well as to the natural world. The extraordinary success, therefore, which attended the preaching of the gospel, under the circumstances which I have now pointed out, must, according to this principle, (the truth of which is supported by reason, and confirmed by observation,) be attributed to some cause sufficiently powerful to produce an effect so wonderful and unprecedented, and consequently, to some cause or influence which does not, in an equal degree, accompany the ordinary preaching of the gospel; because an effect similar to what I have now described, does not, in the ordinary course of events, (as we may see from daily experience,) attend the efforts of those who are now labouring in the “kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” The best way to ascertain the true state of the case, is to hear what the apostles themselves say on the subject; and by doing so we come at once to

the point. These holy men ascribe the effect which was produced by their labours to the positive and direct influence of heaven. We are told, Mark xvi. 20, that they went forth and preached every where, the *Lord working with them*, and confirming the word by signs following. They assure us that the excellency of the power, by which the whole was accomplished, was *of God* and not of man. 2 Cor. iv. 7. And again, that *it was God* who always caused them to triumph in Christ, and made manifest the savour of his knowledge by them in every place. 2 Cor. ii. 14.

Such is the testimony which the apostles, and others of the first preachers of Christianity, have themselves furnished respecting their labours, and the primary cause of their unprecedented success; and this testimony, supported as it is by the evident purity of their motives, and the exalted integrity of their character, we are constrained to receive, because the facts of the case are of so extraordinary a nature, that they shut us out from every other rational conclusion. “ The men who could have set out as they did to convert the world from idolatry and irreligion, with no instrument but a cross, and no patronage but his who was crucified upon it, must either have been mad, or inspired, and the result proves which was the fact.”

The first preachers of Christianity could no more have accomplished what they did in their own strength, or by their own feeble exertions, than an infant of “a span long” could pluck the sun from the heavens, or alter the course of the planetary worlds. If God had not been with them, their “work of faith and labour of love” would have produced no effect; the old superstition of the west would never have been overturned; but to this day darkness would have continued to cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. Isa. lx. 2.

Now, if it be admitted, and I think it must be admitted, that the interposition of a Divine agency was absolutely requisite in order to effect this triumph, then the fact that such a triumph has been gained, directly proves that this agency did interpose, and did actually put forth the energy of its power to accomplish it: and the proof of such an agency having interfered, clearly shews, and illustrates, and exhibits likewise the truth and divine authority of the religious system on behalf of which this special interference took place. It proves even more than this; it not only proves abstractedly the truth of the system itself, but, in addition to this, it also proves the truth and inspiration of every “part and parcel” of those sacred writings in which that system is reveal-

ed. If the fact is clear and undeniable, that when the disciples of Jesus Christ went forth to execute their commission, they did not go forth in their own strength, but went forth "the Lord working with them," then the point in debate by this very circumstance, is brought at once to an issue; since this marked attestation to the Christian system proves it to be a system which has the sanction of the Divine Being; for we cannot suppose, had it been the offspring of fraud and deception, that he would have interposed, and, by thus causing his power to co-operate with the labours of the men who were engaged in its propagation, in such an extraordinary manner, have blessed their endeavours, and granted them success.*

* I am aware that the train of reasoning here pursued is open to objection. It may perhaps be said, that if the gospel triumphed so illustriously in the early ages of Christianity, and if this triumph is to be considered as a proof of its divinity, how is it that we see nothing of the same kind going forward in the present day? Why does not a measure of the same success, if Christianity be true, attend the labours of the missionaries who are now engaged in preaching it, in this and other idolatrous countries? This objection, I reply, loses all its force if we view the subject in a proper light. In short, I may say, that this very circumstance, instead of detracting from, in reality adds weight to our argument. The reader must bear in mind that it is not, as I have before stated, the fact, that the gospel triumphed abstractedly considered that is the basis of the argument; but it is the evidence (deduced from the *character* of its triumphs) that a divine power—a large measure of divine influence, every where

It is clear to a demonstration, that a religion propagated—successfully and extensively propagated—under the circumstances in which Christianity was propagated, in the early stages of its career, must have been promulgated and sustained by a power from on high,—by a su-

accompanied it; it is this, I say, and not the naked isolated fact of its triumphs that we consider the distinguishing evidence of its divinity. Now the situation in which the missionaries of modern times are placed, and the advantages which they enjoy, are in every respect, outwardly considered, decidedly superior to what were possessed by the first preachers of the gospel; and yet the success of the latter (as far as individual instances of conversion are concerned) bears no comparison to the success of the former. The comparative want of success, therefore, which attends their labours clearly proves the truth of what we have before stated, that the whole of what was accomplished in the apostles' days, and the succeeding age, was accomplished by the direct and *extraordinary* interposition of heaven. If ever this work could be accomplished by the efficiency of the instruments employed, independent of Divine agency, then we might expect a much greater effect to be produced in the present day than that which was produced in primitive times, because we consider that the generality of the instruments now employed, humanly speaking, are much better qualified for their work than the first preachers of Christianity were: and, as to the circumstances in which they are placed, they possess a thousand advantages which the preachers of those days did not possess, with few or none of their disadvantages. The only reason, therefore, that can possibly be assigned for the very different result which has hitherto attended the labours of the two parties, is, that a very limited measure of divine influence accompanies the labours of the former, and that a very large measure of this influence accompanied the labours of the latter.

If, however, we pass by external circumstances, and compare

pernatorial influence. “A flame living in the very bosom of the deep, opposed by all the winds that blow, often obscured, nearly extinguished, always resisted, yet rising from apparent exhaustion and decay into new brightness, enlarging the circle on which it shines

the two classes of labourers in other respects, we shall find that the apostles, and their immediate successors, were possessed of advantages of which the missionaries of the present day are destitute. They had means of a miraculous nature which they could employ, and facts to which they could appeal, which modern missionaries have not. They were, moreover, according to a promise which we find referred to in Luke xxiv. 49, and also in Acts i. 4, and following verses, endued with an extraordinary power from on high. They lived likewise under an extraordinary dispensation of the Spirit; the influences of the Spirit were copiously and unceasingly poured out upon them, and it is to the extraordinary measure of this influence that the unparalleled and abounding success which every where attended their labours must be attributed.

I have, as the reader may perceive, dwelt more particularly in this section upon the miraculous and extraordinary manifestation of divine power which accompanied the labours of the first preachers of Christianity, as it strikes the mind with greater force, and stands forth to view with a more marked prominence of character than do the ordinary influences of the Spirit;—the influence which accompanies the labours of God’s faithful servants in general. It is, however, a source of devout thankfulness to God, that, although the former has ceased to exist in the church, at least for the present, yet the latter has not. God does, from time to time, even now pour out his Spirit, and bless the efforts of those who are labouring in his moral vineyard. And I wish particularly to impress upon the reader’s mind, in connection with this subject, that the manifestation of this power, even in the most ordinary way, although it be but in the conversion of a single sinner,

age after age, and smiling on the elements which are battering against its existence, must be sustained by ethereal fires."

The sum of the entire argument, therefore, is as follows.—"Here is a religious system denominated Christianity, which enters the world at a most inauspicious period, and under the general supposition that it is an imposture. It has not one principle in common with the religions which prevailed at the time it made its appearance. It is attempted to be propagated by a few persons, who are but very imperfectly qualified for the undertaking, and who are hated of all nations. It is opposed from the very first by Jew and Gentile, and chiefly by those who had most power and influence in their hands. Moreover, this religion is hostile to human opinion, human prejudice, human interests, human nature; and this is apparent from

proves, if not in so striking and conspicuous a manner, yet in point of reality as certainly and as clearly, the truth and divine authority of that system of religion and morals through which this change has been effected, as that larger measure of divine influence does to which I have previously referred. It proves, that is abstractedly and alone, without any other species of evidence, that the Bible, the truths and doctrines of which have been the grand instrument of that sinner's conversion, is undoubtedly a book which has come from God, and that it is the exclusive revelation which he has given to effect the salvation of a guilty and an apostate world.

the admitted nature of man, and the avowed principles of this religion, as well as from the fact that when men have been induced to adopt the Christian name, they have not unfrequently remained at enmity with the Christian faith ; and that there has been in every age a predominant disposition to misunderstand, and misrepresent it,—to pervert, and degrade it ;—yet has this religion been propagated over the earth with a facility unparalleled by any art or science ; yet has it found a place for itself in many a mind and country in which the simplest mathematical demonstrations are to this day unsolved problems :*—CONSEQUENTLY

* The Rev. Andrew Reid, (to whom I am indebted for several ideas introduced into this Section,) has laid down the four following hypothetical propositions in his excellent sermon on this subject.

1. If a system of religious opinions and principles, *unlike* every thing suggested to the mind of man for four thousand years, should prevail rapidly, and extensively, over every existing system, then would there be *some* reason to suppose that it was aided by supernatural influence.

2. If this system should prevail without the assistance of suitable and efficient instrumentality, the evidence for supernatural influence would in that case become stronger.

3. If this system should prevail not only without adequate instrumentality, but against fixed, continued, and universal opposition, the evidence would be yet stronger, and more decisive.

4. If this supposed system should prevail over the very propensities and principles of human nature, subduing its lusts and passions, changing its very dispositions, and bearing all be-

this religion, thus supported, thus sustained, and thus propagated, could not have been propagated by any earthly power,—could not have been propagated by the mere external agency of

fore it, the evidence would in that case be demonstrative and paramount.

Now, on the first of these propositions we observe ; that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is totally unlike every system of religion which existed in the world previous to its introduction, and yet it prevailed rapidly and extensively throughout all the nations of the west on its first promulgation. We have, therefore, according to the principle laid down in the first of these propositions, *some* reason to believe that it was aided by a supernatural influence, and that it consequently is a religion which has the sanction of divine authority.

On the second proposition we remark ; that the gospel prevailed, as has already been shewn, without the assistance of suitable and efficient instrumentality ; the evidence therefore of its having been sustained by such an agency, and that it is therefore a religion which has come from God, becomes increasingly stronger.

We observe on the third hypothesis, that the gospel (as the reader may perceive) not only prevailed without suitable instrumentality, but against fixed, continued, and universal opposition ; the evidence, therefore, of its divine origin rises still higher, gains additional strength, and becomes at each succeeding step more and more convincing.

Lastly, the gospel prevailed not only over all the disadvantages here specified, but it likewise triumphed over the very propensities of human nature, in turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18, in casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5 ; the evidence, therefore, arising from this, and the other three sources taken in connection with each other, may fairly be considered as

providence; but it could have been propagated, and that only, by a spiritual, supernatural influence, addressed to the understanding and heart of man. This religion must therefore be divine; and its propagation through all ages is a distinct, independent, and speaking evidence of its divinity."

SECTION 2.

Of the Spread of Mahomedanism.

Perhaps it may be said, in reply to what has been advanced in the preceding Section in support of the truth of Christianity, that, if the extensive spread of a religion is to be considered as a proof that its authority is divine, then the Koran of Mahomed, on account of the multitudes who have embraced it, is

demonstrative and paramount, and such as none but the most obstinate and determined infidelity can possibly resist.

I recommend the whole of this excellent sermon to the reader's attention; it will richly repay him if carefully perused. The propositions which the judicious author has laid down, are certainly very striking, and he has proceeded step by step to illustrate them, and has wound up the whole in so masterly a style—has exhibited the evidences of the divine authority of the New Testament in so clear and perspicuous a manner,—that he has made them by his mode of reasoning, and by the climax to which he has brought them, almost to stand on a par with a mathematical demonstration; and we are quite disposed to think, that the latter (could it be obtained) would not be a whit more convincing than the former, to a candid and ingenuous mind.

on this ground as well authenticated as the Christian revelation. In answer to this objection, I reply, that the simple fact of a religion spreading, is not (as has already been shewn) in itself to be considered a proof that it is of divine authority. It is the nature of the religion, and the circumstances under which it spreads, which are principally to be considered, in our endeavours to come to a conclusion on this important and interesting point. The extension of the religion of Mahomed was not accomplished under the peculiar circumstances in which Christianity was placed on its first publication ; and it is not the bare fact of the triumphs which it has obtained, but the accumulated difficulties under which these triumphs were achieved, to which we appeal, and from which the argument in support of its divine authority is principally drawn. I shall therefore proceed to answer this objection by endeavouring to shew, that if a comparison be instituted, and due attention be paid to the opposite nature of the two religions, and the different circumstances under which they obtained their respective triumphs, there is nothing in it detrimental to the truth of Christianity ; neither can any weight on this ground be attached to Mahomedanism, nor any reason-

able argument for its truth be drawn from the achievements it has effected.

1. If we contemplate the nature of the religion of Mahomed, and compare it with that which is revealed in the Scriptures of the New Testament, we shall observe a striking difference between the immoral tendency of the former, and the exalted purity of the latter. Mahomedanism allows in the present world, and promises in the future, the enjoyment of various kinds of sensual indulgence. On this account, therefore, it is exactly adapted to the depraved and vitiated desires of the human heart, and calculated, by this indulgence of the passions, to meet the reception, and obtain the approbation of fallen sensual man. But Christianity, instead of thus falling in with the natural propensities of mankind, is in direct opposition to them. It admits of no sinful indulgence whatever: every man who receives it is commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil, (1 Thess. v. 22;) and it solemnly and imperatively declares, that the soul which sinneth, shall die, (Ezek. xviii. 4.) Whilst, therefore, the strict requirements of the Christian religion, being entirely opposed to the natural inclination of mankind, would be a weighty obstacle in the way of its progress,

the reverse being the case with the religion of Mahomed, must necessarily have had a great influence in accelerating its interests, and procuring its establishment, in the countries where its nature, its claims, and its promises, were made known. It is true there are in this, and also in various other countries, many persons who call themselves Christians, who are yet living in every kind of wicked and sensual gratification ; but this is no objection to Christianity, any more than the laws of a wise and excellent king can be objected to, because a multitude of persons, residing in his dominions, and professing to be his subjects, live in the breach of them. The fault is in the people, not in the laws by which they pretend to be governed. The laws are good, and excellent, and wise; and it is the sin and wickedness of these people, which prevent them from regulating their conduct according to the royal statute of the sovereign whom they profess to obey. So it is with the requirements of Christianity: its laws are perfect, its precepts pure, and admirably calculated in their moral tendency to make men wise, and holy, and happy. Every one who names the name of Christ, is, as a test of allegiance to him, commanded to depart from iniquity, (2 Tim. ii. 19.) And although men

may call themselves Christians, and regulate their external conduct according to the precepts which the gospel inculcates; yet, if they do not act in entire conformity to this command, and watch against the rovings of an impure imagination, they are mere hypocrites in the sight of him who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings, (Jer. xvii. 10.) The profession which such persons assume, and the name which they bear, instead of availing them any thing, only adds to their guilt, and will proportionably increase the weight of that future misery which inevitably awaits them. God, we are told, hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, (Acts xvii. 31.) And their folly on that day will be made manifest unto all men, (2 Tim. iii. 9.) when, being numbered, as they then will be, with the wicked, they will be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.

2. The greatest difficulty which a new religion usually has to encounter, arises from the attachment of the people, to whom it is proposed, to the previously established and prevailing system; especially if it be sanctioned by authority, and has (which is frequently the

case) been reverenced and adhered to by their ancestors, from time immemorial. Men are usually prejudiced in favour of the religion in which they have been educated, and consequently have an aversion to listen with candour to the claims of a new one. Mahomed, however, had no difficulties of this kind to encounter, when he commenced his endeavours to proselyte his countrymen to the faith of the Koran. There was no previously established system of religion in the country in which he was born, either to thwart his efforts, impede his progress with its counter claims, or excite a superstitious people, a bigoted priesthood, and an intolerant government, to resist him with the sword of persecution. But the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ had, at its outset, the most appalling difficulties of this nature to overcome. It was opposed to every established system of religion in the world ; it coalesced with none of them, but required, on the contrary, the destruction of them all : consequently, wherever it went it was looked upon as an adversary, and its claims were universally denied. Cruelty, bigotry, and malice, for a long series of years, rose up as its daily opponents, and called forth the most vigorous and unremitting efforts of its enemies to effect its destruction, and blot out the name

and the memory of its Author from the face of the earth.

3. Mahomed descended from a great and noble family, and had therefore wealth, honour, power, and secular influence engaged on his side. All these united their efforts to aid his undertaking, and promote his ambitious designs. With Christ, however, it was quite the reverse. He was born in obscurity. He possessed no influence of this kind ; and, instead; of being supported by temporal power like Mahomed, the religion which he established, (as I have previously observed,) had to contend with all that this power, influenced by pride, and prejudice, and malice, could do to ruin its interests, and prevent the people to whom it was addressed from receiving it.

4. The religion which Mahomed introduced, only professed to be a reformation of the religion existing where it spread. But Christianity, instead of doing this, was positively destructive of all the systems which existed in every country into which it found an entrance. Mahomedanism enlisted national prejudices in its favour, by claiming a relation to Abraham and Ishmael, the venerated fathers of the people addressed. Christianity, by the abrogation of the Mosaic institutions, was hateful to the Jews, and by its being a graft on the Jewish scrip-

tures, was in the highest degree nauseous to the Gentiles. Mahomedanism prevailed over a people, ignorant, and barbarous, and having but little stake in any established mode of worship. Christianity was propagated in Jerusalem, and Athens, and Rome, where men were most enlightened, and where a strange religion would undergo (as we know Christianity did) the severest scrutiny, and meet with the most determined resistance.

5. Mahomedanism, as I have before remarked, tolerates in its votaries various kinds of sensual indulgences. But to Mahomed himself an almost unlimited range of sensuality was allowed; after having been detected in the act of adultery, (even amidst his plurality of wives,) it was to excuse the past, and give unrestrained license for the future, that he declares the following revelation to have been made to him, which stands recorded in the thirty-third chapter of the Koran, (and it is God who is represented as speaking,) “O Prophet, we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given thy dower, and also the slaves which thy right hand possesseth, of the best of which God hath granted thee above the rest of the true believers.” And further, to free him from an oath which he had taken not to approach again the party whom he had debauch-

ed, and from which obligation he desired afterwards to be released, it is expressly said in the sixty-sixth chapter of the Koran, “O Prophet, why holdest thou that to be prohibited which God hath allowed thee, seeking to please thy wives ; since God is inclined to forgive and be merciful, God hath absolved thee from thy oaths, and God is thy master, and he is knowing and wise.” His wives are then threatened in the same chapter and commanded to submit themselves to these arrangements, “If he divorce you, his Lord can easily give him an exchange of other wives better than you ; women resigned unto God, true believers, devout, penitent, obedient, given to fasting, both widows and virgins.” These passages need no comment, they are easily seen through ; the hypocrisy is too thin a veil for the pollution, and the wickedness of the latter can only be exceeded by the blasphemy of the former,—the blasphemy of alleging a divine permission thus to throw the reins upon the neck of his lusts, and give loose to his sensual appetites. How different from all this is the doctrine taught by Him, who said, “If a man look upon a woman to lust after her, he hath committed adultery with her already in his heart ;” and of whom it is said in the inspired page, that he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

Such an high priest became us, and such was ours, “ holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;” and he is “ made higher than the heavens.”

6. Mahomed, at the outset of his career, tried what could be accomplished by exhortation and address; and yet, with all the secular influence which he possessed, he scarcely effected any thing by these means: indeed, it was not until he took to the sword, that his religion began generally to spread. But whilst Mahomed, with all his influence, could effect nothing by verbal exhortation; Christ, in this way, without any similar influence, effected every thing. The Christian religion admits of nothing like compulsion: with its propagation the sword has nothing to do; it was not by the force of temporal power, but by the force of sound arguments, and plain statements, which the judgment of those to whom it was addressed acknowledged to be true, that its triumphs were effected.

7. Wherever the religion of Christ went, the people who heard it, were, as to compulsion, (as they now are in this country,) at liberty either to receive or reject it. But it was not so, where the claims of Mahomed were made known. The people to whom he addressed his message, must either receive his

Koran, or part with their heads. Multitudes lost their lives for not receiving it. But, on the other hand, multitudes lost their lives, and others their reputation, their property, and their all, and became outcasts upon the face of the earth—despised, afflicted, tormented,—for receiving and adhering to the universally despised and persecuted gospel of Jesus Christ.

8. The propagation of the Christian religion was entirely the work of persuasion and conviction ; but it was quite the reverse with the religion of Mahomed. It went not a whit beyond the point of his murderous weapon ; nor is it known that he made a single convert in the face of persecution, and danger, and death. But to these trials, all who embraced Christianity on its first propagation, were perpetually exposed ; and its converts frequently endured them in the most painful and aggravated manner, rather than shrink from the acknowledgement of its truth, or give up their faith and hope in its promises.

9. The general character of a religious system, as well as the probability of its truth, may in some measure be ascertained by contemplating the character of its founder. If nothing more, therefore, could be brought forward to stamp the Koran as a fiction, and to shew that the religion which it unfolds is an imposture,

the hypocrisy and lewdness of Mahomed are quite sufficient to do this. It is not however in these two respects alone, but in every other, that the personal inferiority of Mahomed appears, when he, and his unhallowed system, are brought into comparison with the religion of the New Testament, and the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, as exhibited in the pages of that holy book. The following is the beautiful, touching, and eloquent language of Bishop Sherlock, relative to the comparative merits of the two systems, and the characters of their respective authors. "Make," says this Christian Divine, "the appeal to natural religion, or which is the same thing, to the reason of man; set before her Mahomed and his disciples, arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands, and tens of thousands, who fell by his victorious sword; shew her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirements; shew her the prophet's chamber, his wives and concubines, let her see his adulteries, and hear him allege revelation, and his divine commission, to justify his lust and oppression. When she is tired of this scene, then shew her the blessed Jesus,

humble, and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and perverse. Let her see him in the most retired privacies; let her follow him to the mount, and hear his devotions, and supplications to God; carry her to his table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her see him injured but not provoked; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to the cross, and let her view him in the agonies of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ When natural religion hath viewed both, ask her, ‘Which is the prophet of God?’ But her answer we have already learnt, when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the centurion who attended at the cross; by him, she spoke and said, ‘Truly *this* was the Son of God?’”

10. The religion which is founded in truth and righteousness, and which has God on its side, will stand and triumph, in spite of all the opposition of men, and the malice of devils. The religion of Christ has this foundation; and it is supported and protected by the power of God; consequently it is gaining strength, extending its peaceful reign, and marching on

to universal conquest. But the religion of Mahomed, (like that of the Hindoos,) in consequence of its wanting this foundation for permanent endurance, daily loses ground. It waxes weaker and weaker, and the time is probably not far distant when it will, with every other false system of superstitious and idolatrous worship, be swept as a refuge of lies from the face of the earth.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE OBJECTIONS COMMONLY ADVANCED BY
THE HINDOOS AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN RELI-
GION.

Objection 1. If Christianity be true, and the only true religion, and its reception necessary to salvation, why has not God superseded the necessity of so many arguments by giving some plain and convincing proof of its divine authority, which appealing to the senses of men should irresistibly compel them to believe it?

Answer. We are not fully acquainted with the plan of the divine government, and are therefore, generally speaking, utterly incompetent to judge what it is proper for God to do, or not to do. His plans occasionally develope themselves, and we are favoured with a partial view of his procedure in the government of his creatures, by the numerous changes which are perpetually taking place among the nations of the earth. It is not, however, to be supposed, that we should know all the reasons which exist for the various measures which he pursues, or be able to fathom the entire mysteries of the divine counsels. We are, there-

fore, not at liberty to ask questions of this nature, or to cite **HIM**, of whom it is testified, (Isa. xxviii. 29,) that he is “wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,” to the tribunal of our shallow reason and mistaken judgment. There is no end to questions of this kind. We may just as well ask, Why has God only made one sun and one moon ? Why has he made all men of one form, and nearly of one stature ? Why has he created so many destructive insects ? and a thousand other questions of a similar kind, all of which are as unreasonable as they are wicked and absurd. In reference to the precise nature and degree of the evidence by which the truth of Christianity ought to be attested, that must be left entirely with **God** : sufficient evidence is all that we can possibly require, and this he has already given us. On the ground of similar evidence, (viz. that which arises from accredited testimony,) we assent to the truth of various occurrences which are perpetually taking place in common life, although we have no opportunity of examining them for ourselves. We are therefore required, (and the requirement is reasonable and just,) to receive the Christian religion on the same testimony ; and all who do not receive it on the ground of this testimony will be favoured with no other

evidence, but left to perish everlasting, as the fruit of their obstinacy and unbelief. To require a continuance of miracles, (as many among the Hindoos profess to do,) is childish and vain; and were God to gratify their unreasonable requirements in this respect, no beneficial effect would be produced. Multitudes of the Jews who were eye-witnesses of the repeated and wonderful miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, continued in their impenitency and unbelief. The word of God assures us, and we may appeal to our every day experience for the truth of the declaration, that the men who reject Christianity, on account (as they say) of the insufficiency of its evidence, would not be induced to receive it on the ground of any evidence whatever. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke xvi. 31.)

It matters not, as I have before observed, how weighty and satisfactory the evidences of Christianity may be in themselves: if they be not candidly investigated, and if the mind be not open to receive and act up to the force of the conviction which arises from their fulness and sufficiency, no beneficial effect of course can be expected to follow. And it is not the want of evidence in support of the claims of Chris-

tianity, but the want of attention to that evidence on the part of the Hindoos, which prevents them from embracing it. If they would but seriously and candidly bend their attention to this subject, they would soon find the proofs of its truth to be utterly irresistible. Their minds would be enlightened to clear and correct views of futurity; and the conviction which they would receive of the supreme importance and paramount claims of the Bible would compel them to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, (Isa. ii. 20,) to acknowledge the authority to which it lays claim, and to receive Jesus Christ, who is therein presented to their view, as of God made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. (1 Cor. i. 30.)

Objection 2. If Christianity be the only true religion, how is it that so many nations of the earth have been suffered to remain ignorant of it to the present day? God dispenses the ordinary blessings of his providence in a greater or less degree to all people:—why then has he totally withheld this supreme, most important, and necessary blessing from so many of his creatures, when all of them equally stand in need of it?

Answer. The reply which I have given to the foregoing question, relative to God's not

pursuing a line of conduct different from the one which he does, applies with equal force to this objection. And it is an objection which will be found, if duly considered, to be as fully applicable to the conduct of God in nature and providence, as it is to the subject of our present enquiries. How many blessings, calculated to promote the happiness and comfort of mankind in the present life, does he give in superabundance to some, whilst in a great measure he withholds them from others? The ground, we know, requires a moderate quantity of rain to make it fruitful and productive; but instead of the requisite quantity being given alike to every part, how frequently does it occur, that in some places a total inundation occurs, whilst in some others there is an almost entire absence of rain, and the ground is burnt up with parching thirst; both of which extremes are alike destructive of the “kindly fruits of the earth;” whilst on the other hand we see some parts favoured with just the requisite quantity, and the inhabitants rejoicing in the bounty which a kind providence has heaped upon them. Now we cannot, we dare not deny the agency of God in these events, although we are unable to account for this apparently unequal distribution of his favours:— and the remark is equally applicable to the

manner in which God dispenses the richer blessings of his grace. He is a sovereign; and nothing can be more blasphemous than for frail short-sighted man to cavil at his procedure, or say unto him, “What doest thou?” (Job ix. 12.); “for he giveth not account of any of his matters.” (Job xxxiii. 13.) Mankind universally have forfeited every claim to his mercy and goodness; and instead of questioning the propriety of his procedure, because he does not bestow his favours alike upon all, we ought to be thankful that he bestows them upon any; and to leave it with him, in the exercise of his infinite wisdom, to judge where, and when, and upon whom it will be most consistent with his goodness, and most calculated to promote his own glory, to dispense them.

It will, however, be found, that this objection, when duly considered, has no application whatever to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel of his salvation is designed to benefit and bless the whole human race; and had the nations of the earth manifested a disposition to receive it, God would undoubtedly, in the course of his providential dispensations, have sent it to them ages ago. It is only their enmity to it, which enmity continues to the present day, that has been the cause of its being withheld from them. The

Hindoos frequently object to Christianity, on account of its not having been sent to them sooner. This objection, however, is invalidated by the history of the primitive church; from which we learn, that it was sent to them soon after the Redeemer's ascension to glory. The apostles Thomas* and Bartholomew† visited this country, and proclaimed to its perishing inhabitants the message of mercy. They were succeeded by Pantaneus, who found amongst the people a copy of Matthew's gospel, supposed to have been left by Bartholomew; but the persecutions to which they were perpetually exposed from the Bramhuns, by whom Thomas, it is said, was put to death, prevented the work from proceeding, and compelled them ultimately to abandon their enterprise of benevolence. From all the accounts which we have of the ancient state of the Hindoos, it appears that they were formerly, as a nation, greatly superior in every respect to what they are in the present day. And I here take the liberty of enquiring, whether there be any thing improper in considering their present inferior condition as the punishment of their sin in rejecting the gospel, which was

* See a Father's Gift to his Children, page 78.

† Murray's Evidences, page 93.

undoubtedly brought to them at an early period by the immediate disciples of Christ. That such a punishment would be likely to ensue, perfectly accords with the Scripture declaration: "Them that honour me I will honour ; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. ii. 30. And I refer the reader for an ocular exemplification of the truth of this passage to the present state of the Jews, who for the same sin are now sunk, and degraded, and scattered over the face of the whole earth. If we survey the present state of the world, we shall also find, that almost every nation is exalted or degraded, in proportion to their obedience to, or contempt of the gospel. What nation at the present day is superior to the English ? If we look at her colonies; if we look at her in a political, commercial, or any other point of view, we shall find that in honour, and rank, and wealth, and influence, she is chief among the nations. And why is it thus ? It is because although there is much in her to be lamented, and some classes of her inhabitants are almost proverbial for their wickedness, England is nevertheless as a nation, distinguished both by her attachment to the gospel at home, and by her continued and strenuous exertions to send it abroad. In this respect she honours God ; and

therefore God, according to the declaration of his word, thus honours and exalts her.

I do not by this statement mean to hold forth temporal advantage as an allurement to men to embrace the gospel, because no such blessings are individually promised, and therefore they are on no account whatever to be expected. But I do assert, that in a national point of view, the greatest advantages and blessings of a temporal nature are derived from receiving and obeying it. And the reason is plain: individual rewards and punishments are reserved for a future state; but as men in that state cease to exist in a national capacity, it necessarily follows, that, as nations, they can neither be made miserable nor happy; and, therefore, national blessings are bestowed, and national punishments are awarded to them in the present life.

Objection 3. There are many things in the Bible which it is very difficult to understand. If it be the word of God, why is it not written in a plain and intelligible manner, so as to be easily understood?

Answer. The Bible undoubtedly contains many things which the mind of man cannot fully comprehend; but they are not such things as it is absolutely essential for him to be acquainted with. Every part of divine truth, the

knowledge of which is immediately connected with salvation, is so plain and clear, “ that he may run that readeth it ;” (Hab. ii. 2.) and “ the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” (Isa. xxxv. 8.) Instead, therefore, of allowing the difficulties which the Bible contains to be of any weight, as objections against it, I assert that they ought rather to be looked upon as additional proofs of its authenticity, being what, in a revelation from the infinitely wise God, we might naturally expect. If a philosopher can with perfect ease speak in such a way that an ignorant, unlearned man cannot understand him, is it at all to be wondered at, that, when God speaks, his address should contain some things that shortsighted, ignorant men, whose eyes are blinded by the god of this world, cannot comprehend? I also observe, that if this be considered as a valid objection, it will be found, on examination, to militate as much against natural, as it does against revealed religion. There are a thousand objects in the world which we cannot comprehend, and a thousand occurrences are perpetually taking place in the earth, by the permission of the God of nature, which we cannot explain or account for on any principles whatever. And yet, notwithstanding all this, we still allow God to be the supreme ruler

of the universe, and the moral governor of all worlds. It is therefore highly improper and unreasonable to bring this forward as an objection in the one case, since we do not look upon it as such in the other. If notwithstanding these apparent difficulties, we still admit the agency of God in the works of nature, why do we not act consistently, and allow him, on the same principles, to be the author and source of the religion which is revealed in the Bible? Reason and nature, instead of opposing, evidently come forward in this instance to lend their aid, and bear their testimony to the truths of revelation. There is a union and harmony in all God's works and ways, and if the Bible, instead of being opposed to, harmonizes with what we see of his character and conduct as they are developed in the creation and government of the world, we ought not to bring this forward as an objection, but rather to look upon it as a strong presumptive evidence that they have both one and the same author: that the same divine and glorious Being who made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his discretion, Jer. x. 12, hath also given the Bible to teach the rational and intelligent creatures whom he hath formed the knowledge of his will, and to guide them

in the path that leads to holiness, happiness and heaven.*

* Dr. Bogue, in his excellent work on the divine authority of the New Testament, has shewn in a very beautiful manner that these mysteries are no real objection to the truth of the sacred writings. "What right," says this excellent writer, "has man in any revelation to require that all should be light and all level to his comprehension? Are there not mysteries in the works of creation concerning which the wisest philosopher must confess his ignorance? Is not this the case in natural religion? Who can comprehend God's necessary existence, a Being without a cause producing it? Why then should it be considered as an objection to the New Testament, that there are some things in it which we cannot fully comprehend? If after we have seen on numberless occasions, faith uniting with reason, the writers should in some instances soar above reason, but never stand in opposition to its dictates, what just cause has man to complain?"

"When we were children, there were things in the conduct of our parents, the reason of which we could not comprehend. And shall the little child *man* imagine that he can understand every dispensation of the great Father of all? We have since seen the wisdom of our parents in that which we condemned, and should not man form the same judgment in respect to the government of God?"

"If the subject be duly considered, so far from its appearing suspicious that there should be mysteries in the Christian religion, it will rather be regarded as a proof of its divine origin. If nothing more were contained in the New Testament than what we knew before, or nothing more than we could easily comprehend, we might justly doubt whether it came from God, and whether it was not rather the work of man's device. Were there mysteries in the *duties* of Christianity, an objection might justly be raised; but not so with respect to the doctrines. That there will be some things respecting the nature and government of God which are not fully revealed; some things which are merely hinted at on account of their connection with other parts of divine truth, and some things which are just mentioned, but

Objection 4. Several of the doctrines of the Bible are exceedingly unreasonable, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, and the innocent suffering for the guilty, as in the Scripture doctrine of the atonement.

Answer. There is not a single man upon the face of the earth, that can fully comprehend the mode of his own existence in the union of flesh and spirit, their mutual co-operation, and the influence which they reciprocally exert upon each other. It is therefore highly absurd for any man to object to the Bible, because he cannot understand the method in which the Divine Being is there represented to exist. Let him first understand the mode of his own existence, before he presumes to reject the Sacred Scriptures, because the mode of the divine existence as there laid down is beyond the comprehension of his shallow powers; and when he has accomplished the former, he may then (at least with more appear-

not explained, because they exceed the grasp of the human understanding, it is natural for us to expect. And what just ground is there of complaint? In a word, if in the phenomena of nature and in the moral government of the Deity, there are many things confessedly mysterious, is it not more than probable that this will be the case in the revelation of his will, where the subject is equally vast, and in some respects more comprehensive? Without mysteries the gospel would not be like the works of God.'

ance of propriety,) express his objections to the latter. As to the objection of the innocent suffering for the guilty, which undoubtedly was the case when Christ died upon the cross, in order to expiate the sins of the world, this I reply is a thing which occurs in every day life; yet God is the righteous governor of the world, and no one can say that such events take place without his permission. How frequently do children, through the wickedness of their parents, suffer for faults of which they are innocent; and subjects, through the tyranny of a wicked king, for crimes which they have not committed? The captain of a ship sometimes drinks until he is intoxicated, in consequence of which he sinks his ship, and every soul on board perishes: and so, in a variety of similar events, the truth of this remark is exemplified. This objection, therefore, is as much opposed to the conduct of God as the moral governor of the world, as it is to the Scripture doctrine of the atonement of Jesus Christ. I observe further, that this doctrine, as it is revealed in the Scriptures, is entirely void of the injustice, which the majority of those who urge this objection generally represent to be connected with it. There was no injustice whatever on the part of God, when he laid the sins of his people upon Christ; because it was, on

the part of Christ, a voluntary act, and agreeable with his own undertaking, as the Redeemer of the world. There was a mediatorial reward connected with the office which he sustained, and which resulted from the sufferings he endured. “ He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” (Phil. ii. 8—10.) “ He is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.” (Col. i. 17—19.) “ He is now gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.” (1 Pet. iii. 22.) There is, therefore, in this view of the subject, no unrighteousness whatever on the part of God ; and seeing he does (as is evident to every observer) govern the world by instrumentality, there is nothing at all unreasonable in the idea of his having effected its redemption in the same way. Were this doctrine, however, open

to the objections to which some men suppose it is, still if God has revealed it, we are bound to receive it, we may sit in judgment upon the evidence by which the divine authority of the Bible is supported, but we have no right to act thus with respect to its doctrines; no right to set up our shallow reason as the standard of what these ought, or ought not to be. This is in fact a part of the subject which is beyond our province; our investigation ought in strict propriety to be limited to the evidences of its truth, and if we obtain satisfaction on this point, it is immediately our duty, however contrary its doctrines may appear to our darkened understanding, to bow in humble submission to its supreme authority, to receive it in the spirit of humility, and to endeavour by divine grace to regulate our conduct according to its sacred precepts.

Objection 5. A great number of Christians are extremely wicked and perpetually indulging in all kinds of immoralities; if the Christian religion were a good religion, those who profess it would surely not be addicted to so many vices as they now are.

Answer. A great number of persons professing themselves to be Christians, that is men who have assumed the outward form of Christianity, are, we are free to confess, wicked enough,

but this cannot be attributed either wholly or in part to the influence of the Christian religion. Numbers of professing Christians are, for instance, drunkards ; but no person acquainted with the New Testament can for a moment suppose that it tolerates drunkenness. Christians, it is true, are allowed the use of wine and other liquors medicinally, and for other purposes, but never to such a degree as to injure or degrade themselves. The sacred writers universally denounce excess in the strongest terms. "Take heed," said the Redeemer to his disciples, "lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life." And the language of the apostle Paul is to the same purport. "Let us walk honestly as in the day time; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying;" and the same writer also positively declares, that they who indulge in this sin, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." I have before remarked that men not unfrequently assume the Christian name whilst they remain at enmity in heart to the Christian faith; and this remark applies to all who are living in sin, whether it be drunkenness or any other sin. Although such men may call themselves Christians, they are evidently strangers to vital Christianity, and either deceiving them-

selves or practising the grossest hypocrisy. Wicked and depraved as numbers of professing Christians undoubtedly are, it is a fact which cannot be denied that the Hindoos far exceed them in this respect. Deeds of darkness are continually practised amongst them which are never heard of in Christian lands, and from which the very lowest orders of even mere nominal Christians would shrink with the utmost abhorrence;* and as far as the two

* I am quite aware of the villanies continually practised in many of the large cities of Europe, but do not think they are (generally speaking) of such a character as to invalidate the truth of this remark. Whenever professing Christians violate the rules of moral propriety, they do so, as I have distinctly specified, in *opposition* to the religion they profess: but as it respects the crimes committed in those cities, the persons who commit them do not do so in *opposition* to the religion which *they* profess, for they actually make no profession of religion at all. They are in fact committed by a class of abandoned men who are totally destitute both of religious knowledge, religious feeling, and religious principle. But as it respects the wickedness practised in India, it proceeds principally from the religionists of the country, from a class of persons who are acquainted with the *Shastrus*, and who are familiar with their prescribed ceremonies, who pride themselves on their attachment to the religion which they advocate, and their subjection to the institutions which they enjoin. I have alluded to this subject in a note at the foot of page 72, vol. i. and if the reader at all doubts the truth of what I have stated as to the moral influence of Hindooism, I would only refer him to the ceremonies which the *Shastrus* prescribe to obtain what the Hindoos call *वाक्मिक्त*; ceremonies calculated not only to sink the men who practise them down to a level with the brute creation, but absolutely (as are also those

systems are concerned, I may also remark, that whenever professing Christians indulge in wicked practices, they do so in spite of, or in opposition to, the religion which they profess; but this is not the case with respect to the Hindoos. Their wickedness, instead of being in opposition to, is rather the fruit and the consequence of their religious system: they are, as the late Mr. Ward has well observed, religiously wicked. Were the religion of the Bible, as I have before stated, to become universally prevalent, wickedness and crime of every kind would forthwith be banished from the earth, and the world would in a measure partake of the felicity and happiness of heaven; but if, on the other hand, the religion and the moral sentiments contained in the major part of the Hindoo *Shastrus* were to become universal, the earth would speedily be deluged with wickedness, and become in point of misery and wretchedness a prototype of the *world of lost spirits*.

Objection 6. Christians eat animal food, and pay no attention to the rules of caste; their religion ought therefore to be rejected on account of its tolerating such improprieties.

referred to in the page specified above) to place them on a level with the "wicked one" himself. Eph. v. 12.

Answer. The distinction of caste which prevails amongst the Hindoos has originated in the wickedness and craft of designing men. It is merely a chain which they have forged with which to bind the ignorant and unthinking part of mankind, and to prevent them from enjoying that liberty which is their natural right and their just due as rational creatures. God hath made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth. Acts xvii. 26. Therefore all the nations of the earth, except the Hindoos, neglect and despise caste. I see no external mark of caste which God has put upon the bodies of men, nor any thing in the natural world which tends to support the idea that He has appointed such a distinction. It is, on the contrary, self-evident that all men are made of the same materials; the same blood flows in the veins of all; all are subject to the same diseases, sorrows and infirmities; and all are pressed by the same wants, and actuated by the same dispositions and propensities. This fact, therefore, with the similarity which every where exists in the human form, the stature of the body, the capacities of the mind, and various other incidental circumstances, is sufficient to convince every rational man, that God has appointed no such distinction as that which is

so warmly advocated by the generality of the Hindoos.*

* The following remarks on the subject of caste will be found in the *Calcutta Christian Observer* for the month of September 1834. They are addressed to the Editor from a correspondent at Gowhatta. "I believe our missionaries in Ava found the Budhbists by no means intractable, and that their success was only thwarted by political parties. Nothing of the kind would oppose their progress at Sadiyah, though I am sorry to say that Bramhanism has crept up so far with our troops and has rendered the Khamtis more superstitious than they were. But as I think I have before mentioned, the Singphos are mostly not even Buddhists, and the Meris, and Abors, and Mishmis are also free from all taint of Hindoo superstition. The Cacharis shortly after the establishment of our government in that quarter, presented a petition to Mr. Scott, the Governor General's Agent, to the effect that they were tired of their gods, as they found they were of no use to them, and should be obliged to Mr. Scott to help them to the knowledge of a better! It is said also that the common people in Assam are in the habit of going out into the jungle at night, to take a good meal of animal food, not daring to do it openly. The above mentioned people, that is, the Cacharis are still for the greater part without any organized religion, and without a priesthood. I believe the half converted amongst them, and also the half converted Ahoms, with some others are only kept in bounds of caste by dread of their superiors and the Bramhans; in fact they all know little about caste.

"The ruling people here were on the conversion of the Rájá made Rájputs, the Culitahs were dubbed Khaits, and other tribes kept up something like the gradation of castes in the west but of course their caste is not admitted by western people.

"Nothing troubles a bigoted Bengalee Hindoo so much as the certain knowledge that caste is where it has not existed from all eternity. When you tell him that the Assamis have been converted (conversion they won't allow,) since Aurungzeb's accession to the throne; that the Cacharis and Manipuris have been converted within the memory of man; and that the Rájá (Gambhir)

In reference to that part of the objection which relates to the use of animal food, I reply, in the language of *Brujumohun*: “There is not the least necessity for making distinctions between particular kinds of food. We see no proof that one kind is clean and another unclean. The Hindoos may call it so if they please, but it is evident that all, after it has been a few hours in the stomach, is equally changed by digestion into excrement or urine. If the meat offered in sacrifice (which the Hindoos consider pure) were not ejected in an impure state, then it might justly be esteemed more highly than other food. For this reason *Shivu* thus speaks on this subject, ‘The water is full of frogs, fishes, water insects, and other creatures; the milk evidently proceeds from the flesh of the cow, and all food grows out of the earth which is the dead bodies of *Mudhoo* and *Koy-*

made Rájputs any day of favourite Naga slaves;—he pretends to disallow the assertion; but, being a matter of fact, easily demonstrated, he can be convinced, and thence it is easy to persuade him that the people of Bengal themselves were also only savages converted by the influx of the western Bramhans, and that the whole ordination of castes was a simultaneous imposition on the inhabitants of Bengal following that event, and no more of divine or eternal origin than in Assam, or the last converted kingdom, Manipur. Facts of this kind might, I think, be advantageously dwelt upon; they must upset the belief in Brahmanism, or shake it greatly.’

tobh; there cannot therefore be any article of food unconnected with flesh.' ”*

Wilson, in his excellent little work on the errors of Hindooism, has the following observations on the same subject: “With regard,” he says, “to the use of animal food, the Hindoos believe that vegetables are endowed with life, and that, as said by Munoo, they have internal conscience, and are sensible of pleasure and pain; and yet notwithstanding this they use them as food with the greatest freedom. In the Hindoo *Shastras* an oil press is condemned on account of the vegetable seed which is destroyed by it; all classes, however, amongst them use oil to a great extent, and thus encourage what they believe to be sinful. Many* of the castes eat animal food; and yet it is seldom said that on this account any evil will befall them. Several classes of the Bramhuns eat fish, under the name of water vegetables. The most learned pundits allow that in the *Satyu Yogn* the sacrifice of even cows was allowed, and that

* This is a quotation from one of the Hindoo *Shastras* of which *Shivu* is supposed to be the author; and if he is to be considered as authority, the Hindoos with this sentiment before them cannot very consistently find fault with Christians on account of their using animal food. *Mudhoo* and *Koytobh* are two wicked spirits slain by *Vishnoo*, and out of whose carcasses the earth is said to have been created. See vol. i. page 49.

their flesh was eaten after it was offered to the gods. The authority of the *Vedu* may be adduced on this point, and several *Pooranus* may be referred to as proving that at a sacrifice offered on one occasion the Bramhuns devoured ten thousand cows which had been offered in sacrifice. In one of the *Pooranus* we are informed that seven Bramhuns were out together on one occasion in a field, and when they became hungry they seized upon a cow belonging to a Rishee, devoted it to the manes of their ancestors, and forthwith consumed it. The skins of animals are moreover without any scruple used for shoes. Thousands of animalculæ are destroyed in the water and other liquids used by the Bramhuns. Insects are crushed to death by them beyond number as they pass along the roads and fields. If it be said then that God has the power, at any period of the world's history, of ordering animals to be slaughtered for the purpose of sacrifice, it may certainly be said that he has the power of permitting them to be slain for the purposes of food. And if many of them are every moment permitted by God to be actually put to death, without any intention on the part of man, the Divine Being most certainly can sanction their destruction for useful purposes."

The Hindoos, we may remark, ought when

they bring forward this objection to bear in mind, that this custom forms no part of Christianity. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. The use of animal food is merely one amongst many other customs of a national character, which has existed in Europe from time immemorial; probably long before Christianity was introduced, and therefore cannot be attributed to it. Europe does not produce sufficient grain to support its inhabitants, Christians could not therefore in their native country obtain a sufficient quantity of vegetable food. In the Bible they find that they are allowed the use of animals for this purpose whenever they are found requisite; many of them therefore receive with gratitude and thankfulness what God has thus graciously given them. Were this practice necessary to be observed on the ground of a positive command, it might then (by a weak conscience) be brought forward as an objection against Christianity; but this is not the case. The Bible does not enjoin, but it merely permits the practice; and as there is no positive command, some converts to the Christian faith have in almost all ages of the Church entirely abstained from using the flesh of animals, and all have a permission to do so if they think proper. "One

believeth," says the apostle Paul, "that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him who eateth not judge him who eateth; for God hath received him." The use therefore of food, whether animal or vegetable, the reader will perceive is, so far as Christianity is concerned, a mere matter of choice; and although some Christians, as I have just remarked, abstain from it, yet the major part see nothing wrong in the use of it. They condemn, it is true, (as they ought to do,) the giving of unnecessary pain to animals, yet they consider themselves perfectly at liberty thus to appropriate them to purposes of utility. Having therefore been accustomed to animal food in their own country, they generally continue the practice in this land; and it is only the prejudice of education, combined with ignorance, which makes the Hindoos object to it. If any man however disapprove of this custom, he is not (in case of his becoming a Christian) obliged to conform to the European usage in this respect. Christianity is entirely devoid of all external ceremonies of this nature: all it requires is supreme love to God and universal love to man, purity of heart, and integrity of conduct; and if these things are attended to, Christians are then at

liberty to follow the dictates of their own conscience, and to suit their own convenience, as to external distinctions and ceremonial observances.

There is no end to the trivial and unreasonable objections of this nature, with which men of corrupt and reprobate minds are perpetually assailing the truth. (2 Tim. iii. 8.) If however its claims be duly attended to, these futile, sophistical reasonings will all speedily vanish before the superabundant proofs of its truth. Investigation is what the gospel invites and requires; and we fearlessly affirm that the more it is investigated, the more luminous and conspicuous will the evidences of its divine original appear; the purity of its precepts will be more clearly seen; the richness of its promises more highly prized; the extent of its consolations increasingly felt, and the value and importance of its institutions more correctly estimated. Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, Rev. iii. 14. will then be found by the sincere and impartial enquirer to be all in all, Col. iii. 11; and if he be exalted as he ought to be on the throne of his affections he will then, whilst looking to him, be ready, in the language of appropriating faith, to say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?

and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee." (Psalm lxxiii. 25.)

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

1. The Hindoos frequently enquire, what benefit they would derive from the gospel, were they to embrace it. To this question I answer; that eternal life in the upper and better world will be the portion of all who receive it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe. (1 Thess. ii. 13.) We are told by the Apostle, (1 Tim. iv. 8,) that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The gospel, in its legitimate influence, is calculated universally to promote the temporal interests of mankind. The promise relating to the present life, however, referred to in the former part of this passage, is only general in its application: it is not, therefore, to be expected, that it will be verified in the individual experience of every man who receives it. The followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the wickedness which every where abounds in the world, are occasionally exposed to such severe persecution through their profession of his religion, that they do not derive from it those temporal be-

nefits which it is otherwise calculated to impart. Were the Hindoos, however, universally to receive and obey it, I hesitate not to say, that they would, as a nation, derive the most important temporal benefits from it. We are sufficiently warranted from experience to assert, that every temporal, as well as every spiritual blessing is, in a national point of view, intimately connected with a general reception and belief of the Christian religion. They are inherent in its very nature; and it has communicated them in rich abundance to all the nations who have hitherto received it. Wherever it has extended its triumphs, polygamy and infanticide have been abolished. It has restored woman to her long lost rank in civil society. It is an enemy to despotism, tyranny, and cruelty. It teaches kings to rule with moderation and equity, and subjects to obey with reverence and love. It relieves the conquered,* and tames the conqueror; and it communicates peace, and truth, and righteousness, and a thousand other blessings, to all

* The Hindoos admit the truth of this remark, because they see it exemplified in the lenity with which the English treat their prisoners of war. They know that the Mahomedans formerly acted in a very different way; and also that, in the present day, no nation which is not under the influence of Christian laws acts with such lenity towards its adversaries, when it has obtained the victory over them.

who are brought under its genuine and benign influence.

2. There is no book of mere human production which will be found, if critically examined, to be free from false principles and incorrect statements. This, however, is not the case with the Bible : *it* contains no false principles, nor any incorrect statements ; but is characterized by perfection and truth in all that it advances. Its decided superiority in this respect, therefore, to all books of mere human production, is a fact which demands our attention, and which can be accounted for on no other ground, than the supposition and acknowledgement that it has come from Him, of whom it is testified, that “ He is a Rock, and his work is perfect ; ” (Deut. xxxii. 3.) that “ his word is right, and all his works are done in truth ; ” (Psalm xxxiii. 4.) and that “ the works of his hands are verity and judgment : all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.” (Psalm cxi. 7, 8.)

It is also equally remarkable, that there is nothing defective in the Bible : every thing that it is requisite for man to be acquainted with, in order that he may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory, (2 Tim. ii. 10.) is in it fully revealed. It is

calculated to answer, in the most excellent manner, all the great and important ends for which God has graciously given it. Every duty which men are required to perform is clearly defined, and the rules necessary to the performance of these duties are fully prescribed. Obedience is authoritatively enjoined, and adequate motives are abundantly presented. The various articles of faith which it inculcates are conspicuously exhibited, and the truth of its claims is fully substantiated, by its purity, by the fulfilment of its prophetic declarations, the miracles which have been wrought to attest it, and the fulness and sufficiency of its own intrinsic evidence. How different then is the Bible in these respects from the Hindoo Shastras ! They are every where full of false principles and contradictory statements. They dishonour God by the representations which they give of his character and government. They open the door to all kinds of licentiousness, by the profane songs, obscene dances, and other indecencies connected with their prescribed festivals. They communicate no benefit to mankind, prescribe no clear rules of moral duty, neither do they present any adequate motive to induce men to obey God, and attend, as they ought to do, to the interests of a future and an eternal world. The very rewards

which they promise to bestow upon the faithful votaries of Hindooism, (could they ever be obtained,) are, as I have before remarked, altogether inadequate to the wants and desires of man as an immortal being, and altogether insufficient to excite his hopes, and induce him seriously and with vigour to use the means which they prescribe in order to attain them. The Bible, in the view which it gives of future happiness, and the promises which it makes of that happiness to every true believer in the Son of God, is in this respect (apart from all other considerations) decidedly superior to the Hindoo *Shastrus*; eternal life beyond the narrow bounds of time,—“an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven,” (1 Peter i. 4.) is the rich reward which it exhibits to all the faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Hindoo *Shastrus* present as a motive nothing which is equal to this. We have here, in this promise of the Christian Scriptures, a felicity presented which meets the most enlarged desires of the human mind. The promise of a blessedness which, if it be considered as a motive to obedience, will ever be found amply sufficient to rouse the Christian to activity and diligence in his Master’s service. Having these promises, he will cleanse him-

self from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. vii. 1.) And animated by the believing expectation of this exalted felicity, he will conscientiously endeavour to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. (Gal. v. 24.) He knows, that in due time he shall reap, if he faint not. (Gal. vi. 9.) He will therefore walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; (Luke i. 6.) and laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset him, he will run with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of his faith. (Heb. xii. 1.)

3. The enemies of Christianity have frequently written against the Bible, and been indefatigable in their exertions to contradict its statements, and to prove, if possible, that it was false. And the men who have engaged in this work were fully competent to accomplish their object, were there any possibility of doing so. They entered fully into the enquiry, and were, as to the generality of them, persons of superior talents and extensive information. It is, however, a fact, that not a single individual amongst them has ever been able to effect his purpose. Had the Bible,

therefore, been false, we may be quite certain, that these hostile enquirers would both have discovered, and exposed its falsehood ages ago. So far, however, from succeeding in their endeavours, their labours have tended only to defeat their own object; and instead of proving, as they designed, that the Bible is false, they have only drawn forth and exhibited in a more striking and satisfactory point of view, the reality of its truth, and the glory and indubitable certainty of its divine origin.

4. Several parts of the Bible have been written three thousand, others two thousand, and no part of it less than one thousand seven hundred years ago; and yet to the present day, no man has been able to improve upon any part of it. The present age has improved upon most of the books written in the last century; and in general, the most ancient books are found to be the most defective and incorrect. How is it, then, that the Bible, which is the most ancient of all books in the world, instead of being the most defective, is not only the most correct, but absolutely perfect in every part? It contains no false principles, nothing superfluous, and is in no respect defective. Its superiority, therefore, to all other books can be accounted for, only on the prin-

inciple of its having God for its author. Were it a work of man's production, it would undoubtedly have been found as false and defective as antiquated books of mere human authority universally are; and it would long since, as the consequence of this detection, have been rejected by mankind as worthless and false.

5. The Bible is the only book in the world which contains an account of the fall. The description also which it gives of the depravity of human nature, as the consequence of man's fallen condition, is also found to be perfectly correct. It anatomizes the human heart, and exhibits its true state in the most clear and striking language; which no other book in the world does. If, therefore, it be not exclusively from God, how is it that it exclusively unfolds those distinguishing truths, which God alone could reveal?—truths which involve the most important consequences, and which it is absolutely requisite for all men to become acquainted with, in order to their salvation.

6. The Bible invites all to whom it is proposed, to examine it. And in order that it may be examined, Christians have united themselves into various societies for the purpose, and have translated it into almost all the lan-

guages of the earth, which they would not have done, were they not fully convinced of its divine authenticity. The policy of a deceiver is to move as silently as possible, in order that he may avoid detection. It is not a good, but a bad rupee, that suffers by falling into the hands of the money changer. The Hindoo Shastrus, by being kept secret, and forbidden the people, are like a bad rupee, to which an examination would prove fatal. But it is the reverse with the Bible: like the good rupee, it has nothing to fear from the closest scrutiny, and the most critical investigation. Bring it, therefore, to this touchstone of truth; there is no danger to be apprehended from the result of the research: the more it is examined, the more it will be valued, and the brighter will appear the evidences of its truth, and the certainty of its divine origin.

7. The Lord Jesus Christ frequently and plainly forewarned his disciples of the troubles and the difficulties to which they would be exposed, in consequence of their having embraced his religion. It is, therefore, evident that he was not an impostor, otherwise he never would have acted a part so prejudicial to his interests, and so much calculated, by the discouragement which it would excite in his fol-

lowers, to ruin the interests of the religion which he was endeavouring to establish. An impostor, in his efforts to draw men after him, will tell them enough of the advantages to be derived from the system which he advocates ; but the difficulties and trials to which they may be exposed, if they adopt his sentiments, and follow his prescribed rules, he will carefully keep out of sight. And if Christ had been an impostor, we may reasonably suppose that he also would have adopted this line of policy ; and instead of exhibiting the dangers, have only pointed out to his followers the benefits which they would derive from embracing Christianity.

8. In addition to the evidences contained in this book, there are a variety of others which might be brought forward in confirmation of the truth of Christianity. They are, however, of such a description, that a knowledge of the nature, spirit, and design of Christianity is requisite, in order to understand and appreciate them. It is in vain to attempt to make a blind man understand the properties of light ; and it is equally in vain to endeavour to make men who have not obtained an experimental acquaintance with the gospel to understand the value, the force, and the application of

some of its most important evidences. We read, (John vii. 17.) "If any man will do his will, (i. e. the will of God,) he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God :" and again, (1 John v. 10.) "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." These passages refer to an evidence which, in the experience of the Christian, is one of the most satisfactory and convincing that can possibly be advanced in support of the truth and divine authority of the Bible. It is, however, a proof which cannot be insisted upon before those who are strangers to the power and influence of the grace which the gospel imparts, because "the knowledge of the doctrine," and "the witness" promised in these passages, apply exclusively to the Christian. It is, therefore, requisite for men to become Christians, before they can comprehend its nature, or fully appreciate its worth and importance. Besides this, there are also other proofs, which cannot be enlarged upon in writing for the Hindoos, because they would not be able to judge of their truth and their force, on account of their not being sufficiently acquainted with European literature. I have however, brought forward in this work six distinct classes of evidence, viz. the internal evidence, the evidence derived from the mi-

racles, the prophecies, the resurrection, the spread of the gospel; and the sufferings and conduct of the apostles; exclusive of the concluding observations and other collateral remarks, calculated to throw increasing and important light upon the subject of our enquiry. Each of the Chapters on these subjects, but especially the three Chapters on the Internal Evidences, contains, I conceive, sufficient proof to convince the judgment and solve the doubts of every candid enquirer. And the combined proof arising from the whole forms such a body of solid, satisfactory, conclusive, and irresistible evidence, as no other book in the world can advance in support of the truth, either of the histories which it records, or the precepts which it inculcates. The man, therefore, who rejects Christianity on account of the insufficiency of its evidence, will have no excuse to plead when he is called to "appear before the judgment seat of Christ;" (2 Cor. v. 10.) who will shortly "be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Christ died upon the cross to atone for the sins of mankind. In doing this, he has manifested the greatest love and the richest mercy to our fallen race. The religion which he has established in the world is confirmed and substantiated by the most incontrovertible proofs ; and is, on account of its excellence and truth, "worthy of all acceptance." (1 Tim. i. 15.) God, therefore, will not suffer those to go unpunished who despise his Son, or who neglect, and treat with indifference, the religion which he has established. Whether men believe or deny the assertion, it does not alter the reality of the case. Their refusing to believe it will neither avert nor diminish the misery which awaits them. And however they may now look upon it as a matter of indifference, the period is not far distant, when they will find, to their everlasting sorrow that Christianity is true, and the only true religion in the world ; and that all systems which are opposed to it have their origin in deception and falsehood. It is not by any of these false systems, however, to which men may now adhere, but by the gospel, that they will be judged at the last day. It is consequently of the highest importance,

that every man who is desirous of distinguishing truth from falsehood, and who feels the importance of endeavouring to secure the salvation of his soul, should divest his mind of prejudice—exercise his reason—and in the spirit of prayer, and in the use of all the means which he does or may possess, with care and diligence examine the claims of the book which is here recommended to his notice. The plea of antiquity, example, and custom, which is commonly urged by the Hindoos as an excuse for their neglecting the claims of the gospel, will prove utterly unavailable at the great day of final retribution. The guilt of those of the present generation of Hindoos, who have heard the gospel, will be far greater than that of their ancestors to whom it was not preached, and who have not passed into the eternal world, as the majority of the present race, who hear it, are doing, under the aggravated sin of rejecting it. The Scripture furnishes us with a satisfactory answer to the futile plea commonly advanced by the Hindoos, as to the duty of continuing to perform what their ancestors have done: it tells us, that “the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts xvii. 30.) “Re-

pent and believe the gospel," (Matth. iii. 2,) is the great mandate which he now issues forth, and which is binding upon all men ; and fearful will be the doom of every Hindoo who hears the call of the gospel, and refuses to obey this command. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," (Acts xvi. 31,) is the rich promise which Christianity exhibits. "He," it is written, "that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life :" but to this is annexed the solemn declaration, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." God has given his Son Jesus Christ to be his salvation unto the ends of the earth : (Isa. xlix. 6.) "neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) "How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?" (Heb. ii. 3.) The case is clear, and the conclusion plain. Such characters will find no way of escape: to them it will soon be said, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." (Acts xiii. 41.) "Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my

reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." (Prov. i. 24—31.)

THE END.

